Two Ways of Meaning in Architecture

– “Conceptual Meaning” and “Pragmatic Meaning”

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Abstract

What makes a building meaningful seems indeterminate. The major aim of this thesis is to discuss two different ways to have meaning in architecture and how the two ways of meaning are related, in order to clarify the significant roles they play in the design.

There is a way that a building can be imbued with the meaning intended for it by the architect, as a result of his/her effort to find a design concept by encountering multiple problems – the function of the building, the complex circumstances of the site, the culture, and the political force, in interaction with his/her personal philosophies and aesthetic preferences. This kind of meaning that comes from the architect's mind will be referred to as "conceptual meaning" in this thesis. However, once a building has been constructed and people get to use the space, these users come to have their own understandings of the building, and this is another way in which the meaning could arrive. This way of meaning that grows out of the experience in actual spaces will be referred to as "pragmatic meaning" in this thesis.

The first chapter of the thesis tries to clarify the definition of "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning". This is followed by case studies of the culture-led iconic building in chapter 2, aiming to explain that the two ways of meaning are inter-filtrated to each other, so that "pragmatic meaning" also plays an important role. Chapter 3 goes further in exploring how the two ways of meaning are associated and reconfirms the significance of "pragmatic meaning", by looking at a deconstructive project, attempting to clarify the way in which "pragmatic meaning" is contained in "conceptual meaning" in this case. Chapters 4 focuses more on the design concepts where pragmatic aesthetics is embodied, thus attempting to provide architects alternative ways of approaching the design. It sees traditional Chinese philosophies are connected with pragmatic aesthetics, and discusses the ways of finding concepts from the encounter with traditional culture with the exemplification of two Chinese projects. Finally, the concluding chapter reclaims the design attitude this research advocates – that architecture is not only about written concepts, and concepts should not only refer to visual effect or symbolic meaning, but rather "pragmatic meaning" is the thing that makes a building essentially meaningful.

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Introduction

I.1 Stepping into the Context – The Two Ways to Have Meaning in Architecture

What makes a building meaningful? When we are reading an architect's explanatory texts to a design, looking at an image of a building in a magazine, or actually visiting a building, the building might give us some impression, it might induce in us some sort of feeling for or understanding of its meaning, or it might even induce us to take some action. We might grasp the architect's ideas by reading his/her texts; we might recognise the symbolic meaning that the building in the magazine implies; we might have a sense that the building is lively and welcoming, that it is somewhere we would like spend time. These sorts of understandings are the meanings that we find in buildings. As we find them, the building will become a meaningful thing to us. But the meanings of a building to us are not consistent; they vary between individuals and at different times, as we understand the building from different perspectives. A building which might impart a sense of belonging to some, such as the library where they always study might for students, could hold a different meaning for others – some might regard the library as a cultural symbol, for example. It seems people attach meanings to a building in various ways, but whether these ways have something in common, and whether they are coherent with the meanings that the architect was trying to inscribe in the building, is a complex question.

It seems there are different ways to have meaning in architecture. It would be interesting to find out where these meanings come from, how they develop, and how the different ways of meaning are related to each other. There seems to be one way of understanding a building that is dominated by the architect. The architect usually attempts to have articulated design ideas; as we can easily see in any design competition, the winning project always aims to have some sort of shining "concept" that helps to describe the central spirit of the design, and the concept is supposed to have considerable influence on the winning of the competition. Architects are, at times, in favour of creating recognisable personalised identities for themselves in the architectural field by constructing distinctive design philosophies. These philosophies might evolve and become increasingly distinct over the course of years of

thinking and experience. As we think of any particular architect, such as Peter Zumthor or Bernard Tschumi, his distinctive thoughts about design will emerge immediately in our minds. This kind of distinctiveness is what the architect tries to achieve. Design philosophies, mainly with visionary drawings, are usually reflected in the architect's design projects, but many architects like to further emphasise their ideas by producing publications. These publications always aim to explain the design concepts behind individual projects as well to provide a description of the architect's overall philosophies. Peter Zumthor's *Atmospheres* indicates something of what concerns and fascinates him during a design, and the things that help him to begin to engage with the design – the sensuous connections between space and the body, such as light, temperature, level of intimacy and the like.[1] Bernard Tschumi's *Architecture Concepts: Red Is Not a Colour* includes most of his writings and conceptual drawings about theories and projects from the 1970s to recent years, comprehensively clarifying his concepts, especially deconstructive thoughts, and how they are embodied in design.[2] There are other producers who help to reproduce architects' design philosophies in the form of publications. We can find plenty of books, magazines, essays and films introducing the design projects and design philosophies of a specific architect.

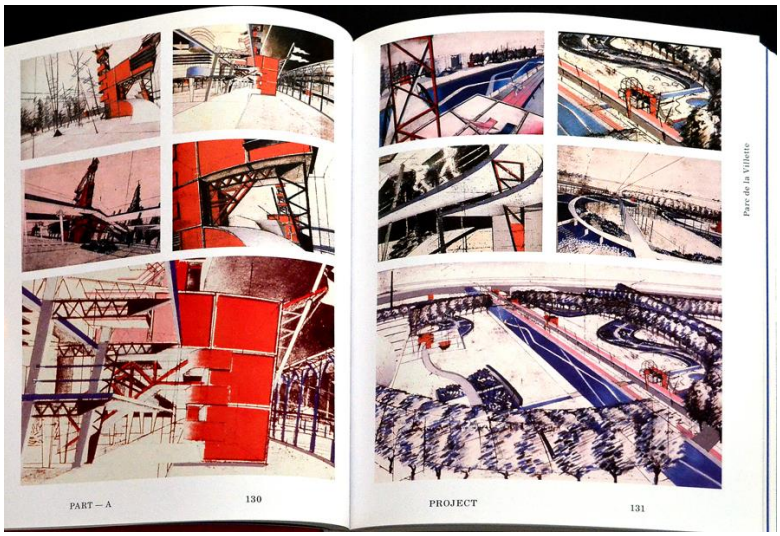

Figure 1. Bernard Tschumi's conceptual drawings in Architectural Concepts: Red Is Not a Colour.

[1] Peter Zumthor (2006), *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments – Surrounding Objects*, Basel, Boston & Berlin: Birkhäuser.

[2] Bernard Tschumi (2012), *Architecture Concepts: Red Is Not a Color*, New York: Rizzoli.

Architects may feel honoured if their philosophies are disseminated throughout the professional field, because that probably means that the meaning they are intending to build has a greater chance of being recognised and accepted by more people. Therefore, there is a way that a building can be imbued with the meaning intended for it by the architect, as a result of his/her effort to find a design concept throughout the design process; this kind of meaning that comes from the architect's mind will be referred to as "conceptual meaning" in this thesis. The way in which an architect tries to find a design concept and the reason why architects are in favour of design ideas and drawings will be looked at in the following chapters. Some architects may approach their concepts in light of their encounters with multiple relevant problems, while others might arbitrarily consider only their personal philosophies and try to apply these to every project. But a good architect is supposed to approach "conceptual meaning" with the intention of finding out the function of the building, the complex circumstances of the site, the spatial experience, the culture, and the economic or political force behind the building, and then to work out a design that tries to deal with all of those things, in interaction with their personal philosophies and aesthetic preferences, at that point a design concept might arrive. So it seems that usually the concept grows out of the designer's subjectivity and the complexities of the project.

Once a building has been constructed and people get to use the space, these users come to have their own understandings of the building, and this is another way in which the meaning could arrive. For example, when students use the university library, they get know that this is a welcoming place for study and social activities, and the longer they are engaged with the library, the closer they might find that they are connected with it, since there might be a relationship established between students' daily life and the library. The library is no longer a physical object; it has become a place where life emerges. Martin Heidegger thought that once an object practically interacted with daily life, it would be recognised as a "thing". When we find something is a "thing", we feel that something is near to us.[3] Sometimes when we have just bought a new item – a coat or a pair of shoes, for example – we know that object belongs to us, but we might not feel that is part of us, because it is not that close to us. After we have

[3] Adam Sharr (2007), *Heidegger for Architects*, London & New York : Routledge, p. 29.

worn the coat or the pair of shoes for some weeks, we might gradually find that it is getting closer to us, more attached to us, and we can now recognise that it is ours in a deeper sense. Similarly, once a building is actually interacted with in our lives, like the library is for students, we may find the building becomes a daily "thing" that is near to us. Therefore, there seems to be a way of meaning that grows out of the experience in actual spaces. This kind of meaning will be referred to as "pragmatic meaning" in this thesis. The time when the building begins to interact with daily life, when there are actual events happening in the building, is the time when this sort of "pragmatic meaning" emerges from the space. "Pragmatic meaning", in this thesis, refers to a way of meaning that is produced through the body's understanding of and the practical use of the space. This way of meaning depends on users' understanding, perceptions and activities in actual spaces, instead of architects' intentional creation from their mind. It does not aim for any particular end; it looks at facts in the moment, as users' experience is always varied, dynamic and unpredictable.

Pragmatic aesthetics sees architecture as a living art to serve everyday needs, rather than a self-sufficient matter of pure art transcending living realms. John Dewey is seen as a pioneer of pragmatic aesthetics. "Living in the fact" is where Dewey's philosophy was oriented. Dewey thought that aesthetic value could never be fixed by theory or criticism but should be tested in experience.[4] Dewey's "somatic naturalism" articulates his idea that aesthetics is rooted in the everyday needs and practical activities of life.[5] It is through everyday life that we can realise aesthetics; similarly, it is through actual experience of a building that we might understand the building – in a kind of "pragmatic meaning" that emerges from experience. Richard Shusterman is also known as an influential pragmatist. Shusterman's pragmatism sees that there is a world based on common sense, which directs us to act and identify things.[6] One's common sense might come from one's culture, social ideologies, family, education and previous practice. When one is about to act, one needs firstly to consider the circumstances in which one is situated; then one takes this understanding of the circumstances and works out

[4] Richard Shusterman (1992), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, p. 46.

[5] Ibid., p. 6.

[6] Ibid., pp. 81–82.

how to act according to common sense. Therefore, “pragmatic meaning” grows, in a way, on the basis of common sense.

As “conceptual meaning” is produced from the architect’s mind, from his/her encounter with multiple territories, with his/her own creativity, once the design is finished the concept cannot be changed, so this way of meaning is generative and unchangeable. The “conceptual meaning” cannot be varied by future users: it is fixed in the design. On the contrary, “pragmatic meaning” can emerge and vary at any time as activities occur in a space. This way of meaning is emergent and dynamically changeable. The architect can never anticipate how future users will use the space and how diverse the “pragmatic meaning” might be.

Since these meanings can be produced through different approaches, I want to consider whether these two sorts of meaning are coherent or conflicting, whether they echo each other or are irrelevant to each other. I have often had the experience that when I intentionally visit a building which is known as having an adorable design concept, it disappoints me, as the actual situation does not match up for me with what the architectural media has led me to expect. The disappearance of this aureole around the building often comes from the lack of consideration of construction techniques, material endurance or the sustainable management of the building. These factors have a significant impact on exactly what we feel in the real space, but the architectural media is always more concerned with the architect’s conceptual ideas, leaving aside the things that actually happen. Some architects’ design concepts are inclined to divorce from daily life, especially those of a few of the “star architects” such as Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind; they prefer to set out to achieve a design from a visual art perspective, so that how a building actually works comes second to how the building looks. The beauty of architecture, to them, turns out to exist in abstract forms rather than the pleasure of life. Seeing architecture as an art work is perhaps a social and financial necessity, since art works are considered superior to everyday life – an idea reinforced by plenty of cultural and social codes in contemporary societies, and perhaps it has historical reasons that categorising architecture as a fine art and the cult of artistic genius since Renaissance. So, being a work of art means being superior, while being associated with everyday needs and habits seems

inferior in comparison.[7] In this conception, architecture is seen as contaminated and hence demeaned by its association with pragmatic thoughts, so that users are often regarded as a threat to the authority of architects, especially that of the global stars among them.

When people actually experience the spaces, they will generate "pragmatic meaning" which might not be the same as the meaning that the architect has supposed will be experienced. Even though some architects try to find concepts from daily life, such as Norman Foster's concept of making the Sage Gateshead music centre an "Urban Living Room", it is hard to predict whether users will understand it in the same way. In this case, I suggest that there might at times be a misalignment between architects' conceptual ideas and users' actual perceptions of buildings. That is, the two ways of meaning generated through two different approaches might be indifferent to each other, even conflicting. However, these two ways to have meaning might sometimes coincide, if an architect designs a building with pragmatic concerns in mind, and then users perceive and experience the building, and act in response to it, as the architect had expected.

In conclusion, architecture sometimes considers itself an arrogant subject. Professionals usually protect their authority of knowledge by "deriding incursions from 'outside' as ignorant or mistaken", manifesting the view that there is a correct interpretation of architecture that is accessible only to them. Two intrusions that architects always attempt to prevent are that of "illegal" architects[8] and that of users occupying architectural spaces.[9] However, as Mark Cousin states, architecture is a "weak" discipline: the inside and outside are always confused. Unlike natural science that is purely concerned with objects, in its discourse architecture ought to take account of the effect of an object on a subject. The subject of architecture is the people who experience that architecture.[10]

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[7] Jonathan Hill (1998), "An Other Architect", in *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 135–159, p. 144.

[8] The illegal architect is not simply a person who produces architecture without a professional qualification, but also includes a registered architect who questions and subverts the conventions, fixed codes and laws of architecture (Hill, "An Other Architect", p. 147).

[9] Hill, "An Other Architect", pp. 137, 146.

[10] Mark Cousins (1998), "Building an Architect", in Hill, J. (eds.), *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 13–21, p. 17.

To some architects, concepts and buildings' appearances have greater value than the things which actually happen in their buildings. But we do not expect to have buildings with shining "conceptual meaning", but that cannot function well. We need something that could move us in everyday circumstances. This kind of quality of a building can be approached through Christopher Alexander's "timeless way of building", a way that transcends styles, concepts and the fixed architectural knowledge and languages, a way that is concerned with life, experience, needs and desires, aiming for the liveliest buildings that are most appropriate in that context. This way tries to approach a design from a more pragmatic aspect, so that a design concept will incorporate pragmatic concerns, and thus buildings will be seen as more honest, realistic, useful and touching.

This thesis attempts to be carried out on the basis of the framework of the two ways of meaning, trying to explore how these two ways of meaning work and are associated in specific cases, and then look at some particular examples whose design approaches are seen to be connected to pragmatic aesthetics, which could offer architects alternative ways of designing. More essentially, this research attempts to confirm a positive approach to design which sees architecture neither as written concepts nor as visual symbols, intending to turn designers' attention to what actually exists and what practically happens in the spaces they create. Architectural meaning cannot be fulfilled by concepts or symbols; it is fulfilled as events dynamically occur in the architectural space. Since events are not predictable, architectural meaning is never fixed and is constantly changing.

Figure 2. Guangzhou Opera House, Zaha Hadid, Guangzhou, 2010.

Figure 3. Royal Ontario Museum Extension, Danial Libeskind, Toronto, 2007.

I.2 Identifying Research Questions and Case Studies

Relying on the fundamental framework, it sets out to identify the specific research questions that have to be addressed and analysed in the research. These questions are taken as both motivations for and the basis of the significance of this research.

I.2.1 The doubt on the domination of "conceptual meaning"

One question can be identified here is about the attitude towards design in the present global architectural field. We can find plenty of conceptual designs in architectural magazines, books and exhibitions and on websites. They try to outline beautiful blueprints by demonstrating how the buildings will change the world. These designs are well presented in the form of texts, drawings, diagrams, images, videos and models. These design concepts appear sound, if looked at from a "fine art" perspective. But it is questionable whether these beautiful concepts could be practically transferred into actual spaces and could work well with users in a pragmatic way. In architectural schools, presentation training is important. Every design project ends with the exhibition of students' work. How well designed the concept is and how well it is presented are closely related to the result of a student's design work. This might convey a sense to students that architectural design is about finding concepts and that it ends as these design concepts are presented in exhibitions. This seems almost like telling students that an architect can act as an arrogant inventor, working alone within an imaginary field, whose role is to invent something which looks novel with the "truthful" forms of representations, but may omit a fact that actual actions and events that take place in the future can also define a space.

Some architects might consider themselves as the sole producers of meaning, if they are doing design with this sort of mindset, then they will be caught in an extreme situation of what Nelson Goodman calls "absolutism".[11] This mind suggests that the correct interpretation of a building is unique, without any alternatives, and the rightness of that is judged by its sole producer, the architect. The absolutism attempts to avoid any engagement of outsiders who would bring different interpretations to the design that might contaminate the rightness of the architect's intended meaning. However, this mind oversimplifies architectural meaning, as the interpretations of a building should be identified from various aspects – the spatial form, the function, the views at different angles, the immediate experience and feelings, the events happening in it, the memories, the drawings of the building and so on. A building is "a

[11] Nelson Goodman (1985), "How Buildings Mean", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 11 (4), pp. 642–653, pp.649–650.

heterogeneous assortment of visual and kinaesthetic experience"[12], the meaning of which is neither unique nor fixed, but growing as the building evolves with the efforts taken on it by its architects, builders and users.

Moreover, it is quite often to see that architects are fascinated with art-like buildings and regard themselves as artists, so for them "conceptual meaning" is more likely to be connected with the visual appearance of architecture. We might find a great number of flawless images on a project's website showing the project from a perfect perspective without any people in the space. The concepts behind such projects are sometimes a sort of visual metaphor. For example, the repeated zigzagging form of Daniel Liberskind's Jewish Museum attempts to respond to the conflicting history of German and Jewish communities, and the two big volumes of Zaha Hadid's Guangzhou Opera House try to represent themselves as two wild stones rising out of Zhujiang River next to which the building stands.[13] Thinking "from the outside in" is one way of starting a design, but there is a risk in that as such a design may become all about visual appearance, leaving pragmatic problems far behind. Guangzhou Opera House is a case in which visual effect takes priority; the novel shape of the building requires that each of the structures is different from the others, which considerably increases the construction difficulties. Just one year after the construction was finished, practical problems started to emerge, such as leaking and walls cracking and falling. We usually attribute such problems to the quality of construction, holding contractors responsible. Contractors should indeed take responsibility for their mistakes in building. But if architects take pragmatic building issues into consideration during the design stage, the likelihood of disappointing practical results could be reduced.

There are some designers who appear to be mainly interested in creating a concept for the sake of a concept. Sometimes this concept may seem to be concerned with the daily lives of local people and/or may have been developed through encounters with the local context, and yet the resultant design may not always be that pragmatic. In such cases, the real aim of the design is probably not to improve local people's lives, but rather it uses the appearance of this

[12] Ibid., p. 650.

[13] Jewish Museum: see figure 8; Guangzhou Opera House: see figure 2.

as a way to get the design noticed and recognised. A Nigerian architect, Kunlé Adeyemi, was awarded the Silver Lion for bringing his Floating School to the Venice Biennale, as part of his ongoing research into building for flood-prone regions.[14] This Floating School was completed in 2013. It was constructed to provide teaching facilities for the slum district of Makoko, a former fishing village on Lagos Lagoon in Nigeria, where over 100,000 people live in houses on stilts. The Floating School boasted of itself as a prototype structure that addressed physical and social needs in light of the growing challenges of climate change in an urbanising African context – a response to rising sea levels and a shortage of development sites.[15] However, though it served well for the community in the first half-year, this award-winning structure was claimed to be a "danger to the kids" by the headmaster, and pupils were evacuated because of safety concerns three months before it completely collapsed.[16] This accident was a serious blow to the much-lauded concept behind the school, and makes us rethink the architectural awards system – perhaps it hinges too much on photographs and written concepts. Though the concept might originate in a response to social problems, there may not be enough effort made to investigate the features of the environment and building structures thoroughly. Awards system, like the Venice Biennale, is in a way pushing designers to think more about how to develop a concept, how to present it in front of reviewers and how to produce publications, rather than to really struggle to improve public facilities. In the Makoko context, if a project considers all the environmental conditions and has a high design quality, if the designers worked closely with the community of Makoko in the long term, to do something useful and sustainable for the local people, then the project could work well in the local situation, the people would understand the project as something related to their daily lives, and their lives would have actually been changed to some extent. In such a case, the

[14] The Silver Lion is one of the awards given at the Venice Biennale of Architecture. The Biennale provides an opportunity for architects and designers to showcase new projects. Only those projects that have higher achievements – the best research or the best national participation – will be awarded.

[15] Amy Frearson (2014), *NLE's Floating School Casts Anchor in Lagos Lagoon* [Online], available at: https://www.dezeen.com/2014/03/25/makoko-floating-school-nigeria-nle/ (Accessed: 25 December 2016).

[16] Marcus Fairs (2016), *Kunlé Adeyemi's Floating School Posed "Danger to the Kids," Headmaster Claims* [Online], available at: https://www.dezeen.com/2016/06/11/kunle-adeyemis-floating-school-posed-danger-to-the-kids-headmaster-claims/ (Accessed: 25 December 2016).

project would be truly admirable.

The Floating School case, conceptual exhibitions, lifeless perspective images, visual skills training in architectural schools and other things alike all point to one tendency – architecture might be more concerned with “conceptual meaning” than with “pragmatic meaning”. It is questionable whether a concept is truly meaningful in actual use, and whether the way that a building works is a response to the way in which it was conceived. This thesis does not mean to disparage the idea of having a design concept. But that concept does not have to be made, it needs to be found out through an understanding of ordinary, everyday life and ought to be sustainably meaningful to future users. The way in which a designer finds a concept is what shapes the eventual design. Finding a concept can act as a motivation to get on with a design. The concept ought not to be seen as a tool for showing off, or gaining fame through exhibitions. It is better seen as a practical design method, or the result of an investigation of existing context, and as aiming to provide a possibility that it might change the way we live. The meaning of a design ought not to end with the concept, or with the dissemination of the concept. The meaning of a design should emerge from people’s perceptions and use of a space, and at that point sometimes the “pragmatic meaning” may reflect the concept, if the architect has taken pragmatic concerns into account in the design. If a concept has boasted of being attached to everyday life but could not practically work, it has to be seen as a “fake” concept. If a concept primarily attempts to deal with visual symbolism, like most projects designed by Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid, instead of fully encountering pragmatic territories, the design will lose the possibility of being connected to the most intuitive and sensuous aspects of life.

Figure 4. Floating School, Kunlé Adeyemi, Makoko, 2013.

Therefore, the first question queries the contemporary design attitude which prioritises "conceptual meaning". The design attitude this research advocates is one in which architecture is not a written concept only, is about neither slogans nor visionary drawings; architecture ought to be about the dynamic process of creating and experiencing, to be something from which "pragmatic meaning" can emerge and something that we recognise as a "thing" near to us. The concept does not refer to building forms only, but also to the design method, the means of creating the space, and the events that might take place in the building. Building form should not always be the central concern of the design; rather, it ought to be the consequence of dealing with pragmatic problems, such as a certain form of window opening resulting from the need to deal with levels of exposure to the sun. Moreover, building form ought not to be seen only as a symbolic object, conveying representative ideas; rather, it acts like an intermediary between physical objects and the body, causing the body to experience emotions and attempting to induce the body to explore the possibilities of "pragmatic meaning".

The design of Centre Pompidou is chosen as a positive example to discuss the association of the two ways of meaning in order to clarify the position that architecture can have a strong concept and at the same time practically work – neither of these is dominant. The design of Centre Pompidou is an example in which the two kinds of meaning are mutually permeated in

a relatively independent relationship. It was designed in the context of cultural liberation, where popular culture is highlighted and high culture is no longer superior. In this context, the design concept is concerned with public interests, and the thinking behind concept is about individuals and diversity, thus rendering the two ways of meaning associated. The design concept will be analysed, and the programmes and events happening in the building will be investigated and compared with the concept, so as to identify whether the conceptual ideas have been transferred into the actual spaces and responded to through live events.

The design of Parc de la Villette is also chosen as a positive example demonstrating the association of the two ways of meaning, so as to confirm that the project can be both conceptual and practical. The design of Parc de la Villette is very conceptual, as it follows the idea of deconstruction, but the deconstructive idea causes the "pragmatic meaning" to be contained in "conceptual meaning". Deconstruction is a linguistic concept that asserts that an object has no essential meaning, and that meaning needs to be generated by users according to their individual situations when they use the object. Therefore, in the deconstructive view, the whole meaning of an object has to be fulfilled in practice. In Parc de la Villette, only after "pragmatic meaning" is achieved in actual spaces will the "conceptual meaning", the idea of deconstruction, be proved to have been accomplished – the "pragmatic meaning" determines the fulfilment of the "conceptual meaning". Thus, Parc de la Villette is selected as an example to clarify this containment relationship. Therefore, the design concept will be studied and the actual events happening in the park will be investigated and analysed by comparing them with the concept, so as to identify the nature of their association.

I.2.2 The way of dealing with "the fall of public man"

There is another question that will be addressed in this research, which is about how the problems of present-day life become at some point associated with the pragmatic aspect of architectural meaning. As Richard Sennett points out in the book *The Fall of Public Man*, cities no longer provide places where people can focus on their social experience, as they used to: they are losing their "public realm" because of the impact of secularisation and industrial

capitalism.[17] In the past, cities were more public probably because people shared in one belief system or the same civic culture. In today's societies, the loss of religion and the rise of individualism leave people apart and social cohesion sundered. People are moving away from the idea of "public man". A city should be a place where strangers meet, but as the public realm has been destroyed, the city has become less sociable. The loss of the public realm has spread in the Western context, but Sennett believes the public realm could be reinstated if the "public man" can be resurrected. A possible way in which this could happen depends on the spatial settings in which people are situated. Spatial settings in public spaces could have catalytic effects on social contact, if these settings are deliberately designed and managed. In a carefully designed public space, people can behave in accordance with their own intentions but also have the chance to understand and experience their spaces in relation to others, so that social interaction is generated and the public realm reawakened.

The urban public realm does not refer only to open-air spaces: public life can also take place in publicly used buildings. Buildings such as galleries, museums, concert halls and community centres can all serve as important generators of social engagement. In this situation, it is necessary to take a rethink of today's architecture, to consider whether it is the design of public buildings that aggravates "the fall of public man", whether a public building can be practically regarded as "public" that provides people with places for social encounter, and whether public buildings could play a role in promoting social contact so as to relieve the problem of the loss of public realm. If the design concept of a public building seeks to explore the "pragmatic meaning" of what might actually make the spaces "public", then the "public man" will survive when people engage with the building.

Many iconic buildings have public roles. Usually, culture-led iconic buildings function as galleries, museums or music centres, which serve as good communal spaces for public gathering and encounters. The iconic role of these buildings helps them to attract the public gaze, but the visual attraction is insufficient to approach the "public" role of the building. How the building will function next, after it has attracted people, to generate "pragmatic meaning"

[17] Richard Sennett (2003), *The Fall of Public Man*, London: Penguin UK, pp. xvi–xxi.

is what the design concept ought to be concerned with, rather than focusing entirely on iconic appearance. In this case, iconic buildings can play good roles in promoting public life with their compelling appearances, if at the same time the space is properly designed and managed and thus it works well.

There are too many "flashy" things in contemporary architectural practice. Many "star architects" who see buildings as artistic works can have a great influence on the mainstream attitude towards design, and thus other designers might think that it is fashionable to follow this approach. Though at times a building has to be designed from a visual point of view, such as an iconic building so as to be responsible for a city's image and development fortunes, the building could at the same time take public life into consideration in its design concept, and thus the building will be both symbolically and pragmatically meaningful.

Therefore, there is another reason for choosing Centre Pompidou: the intention to explain the pragmatic role of iconic buildings in enhancing public life and liberating culture. Iconic buildings are always used to represent a certain political or cultural hegemony with their distinctive building images. Centre Pompidou is not an iconic building only in the sense of the visual image that it presents; it also has a pragmatic role – the architect pays attention towards social engagement issues and how the building will function to accommodate those issues. Thus, ongoing events and programmes in the building will be investigated, in order to identify the nature of the public life there, the building's pragmatic role, and whether and how the highly social involvement will reinforce the idea of cultural liberation.

I.2.3 Seeking alternative design approaches from traditional philosophies

The third point addressed here is whether we could find design concepts – those associated with pragmatic aesthetics – within traditional culture, as to provide architects alternative approaches of design. There is a deep affinity between pragmatic aesthetics and traditional Chinese philosophies. The traditional Chinese ideas are influential to both John Dewey and Richard Shusterman. Chinese tradition's emphasis on humanism, bodily experience, plurality, everyday life, flexibility and changes rather than stability, which are shared with pragmatic

aesthetics.

This research takes a retrospective look at Chinese traditional philosophies, attempting to consider whether we could find some sorts of design ideas in traditional ways of thinking and creation. There are several representative criteria in relation to art and design in Chinese tradition, concerning empirical experience, environmental conditions and bodily senses. Chinese architecture traditionally has an ambiguity in theory and practice. There is no pure conceptual aesthetics in Chinese architecture. Chinese architectural theory is more about constructional conventions which have evolved through long-term building experience in everyday life. The traditional buildings are not designed from an aesthetic concept, but rather the existence of the building is basically for the sake of living. Chinese philosophy originates in the observation of daily phenomena and the experience of real life. All understandings of the world in *The Book of Changes* (the *I-Ching*), the oldest Chinese classic, come from the body's perceptions and feelings of the surrounding environment. Chinese philosophy has always been concerned with the role of the body, bodily sensation and an understanding of the surrounding world, and a sort of "aesthetic sense" that comes from the body's sensations has for a long time been the highest pursuit for Chinese "men of letters" in art creation. Therefore, Chinese traditions have always been rooted in pragmatism.

Therefore, this research intends to explore the ways in which we could find a design concept linked with pragmatic aesthetics through the encounter with Chinese traditional culture. In fact, there is a Chinese tendency in contemporary architectural practice: a group of literary architects who are in favour of Chinese traditional culture attempt to apply the traditional way of thinking to contemporary architectural practice. Leland M. Roth has suggested that cultures in the less developed countries "have recently experienced a resurgence of vigorous architecture" whose forms are shaped by traditional cultural patterns, probably in response to "the symbolic emptiness of imported Western architectural forms".[18] Roth is partly right, but he does not recognise that the resurgence of architecture does not only lie in forms, but is also about a revival of traditional way of living, at least in Chinese contemporary practice. The

[18] Leland M. Roth (1994), *Understanding Architecture: Its Elements, History and Meaning*, London: Herbert Press & Westview Press, p. 516.

design concepts approached in this way are often associated with existing circumstances, everyday demands, building process and tectonics, and the most sensuous aspects of life; the concepts of those practices are very much engaged with pragmatic aesthetics. In this sense, it is necessary to take a look back at traditions and at the contemporary practice of these literary architects, in an attempt to see how they have found ideas by encountering traditional culture, how their design concepts are implying sorts of pragmatic aesthetics and what we could learn from their design approaches.

Pragmatic aesthetics emphasises a sort of dynamic aesthetic experience, which means that art exists not only in static artefacts displayed in galleries, but also in the dynamic way in which it is created and the dynamic experience of responding sensually to it. Red Brick Art Museum could be a good example of a building that reflects the idea that aesthetic value exists in the dynamic way in which that building is created. The design concept of the building is neither about the intended visual effect, nor does it aim for any supposed particular result in advance: it is about a design method, a dynamic process of creating meaningful spaces. The architect found the concept through the encounter with the traditional way of painting and making art works that is embodied in the traditional thinking of pragmatic aesthetics. The design of Xiangshan Campus could also be a good example of a site that reflects the idea of pragmatic aesthetics. Its aesthetic value lies in the dynamic way in which its spaces are experienced and perceived the spaces. What the architect attempted to create was a kind of living atmosphere, an “aesthetic sense”. The “aesthetic sense” can only be gained when one fully exposes one’s body in actual experience; in this way, pragmatic aesthetics are engaged with the concept.

The two Chinese examples here concentrate more on design concepts in which pragmatic aesthetics is embodied, thus attempting to provide architects with alternative ways of approaching the design. The design concepts of the two projects are studied, the projects are visited, and I was fortunate to be able to interview the designer of Red Brick Art Museum. As a contemporary literary architect, he is interested in traditional philosophies and literatures, and in favour of searching for design concepts among traditional ideas; thus, he not only introduced me to the design concept of the museum but shared with me a broader view on traditional Chinese philosophies, pragmatic aesthetics and his general design philosophies.

The studies on design concepts, the field investigations and the interview provided considerable evidence of how architects search for design concepts in an encounter with traditional philosophies, and how these philosophies are connected with pragmatic aesthetics, which offers a different way of making design concepts that can be learnt by architects who are interested in pragmatic aesthetics and traditional Chinese philosophies.

I.3 Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured according to the main topic, research questions and specific case studies identified above. The first chapter of the thesis clarifies the definition of "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" – what the two ways of meaning are, how they are generated (or emerge) in various ways and why they are labelled "conceptual" and "pragmatic".

This is followed by case studies in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, on Centre Pompidou and Parc de la Villette respectively, aiming to explain how the two ways of meaning associate, and particularly seeking to claim the importance of the "pragmatic meaning" of the space. Chapter 2 discusses the culture-led iconic building Centre Pompidou, which is considered as being successful in achieving "pragmatic meaning". This chapter explores the ways in which the two kinds of meaning are mutually permeated – how design concepts are developed through thinking about pragmatic issues, and how they are realised practically through the everyday use of the spaces – and thereby hopes to stress the pragmatic role of iconic buildings in promoting social engagement and liberating culture. Chapter 3 goes further in exploring the association of the two ways of meaning and the significance of "pragmatic meaning". It looks at the case of a deconstructive project, Parc de la Villette, attempting to clarify how "pragmatic meaning" is contained in "conceptual meaning" in this case. Deconstruction sees an object as having no inherent meaning: meaning instead needs to be generated by users according to their individual situations when they are using the object. Therefore, in this deconstructive project, the design concept realises that it cannot have complete meaning: it has to leave room for "pragmatic meaning" to complete the "conceptual meaning" as actual events happen in the park. Thus, Parc de la Villette is selected as an example which clarifies a containment

relationship between these two ways of meaning, in which “pragmatic meaning” determines the fulfilment of “conceptual meaning”. Chapters 2 and 3 try to respond to one question, the doubt about the domination of “conceptual meaning”, by finding out the significant role of “pragmatic meaning” in actual spaces and in the design concept, while Chapter 2 also responds to the question of finding a way to deal with “the fall of public man” by addressing the pragmatic role of iconic buildings in enhancing social engagement.

Chapter 4 responds to the question of seeking within traditional philosophies alternative design approaches that are associated with pragmatic aesthetics. It sees that traditional Chinese philosophies are rooted in pragmatism, and it goes on to discuss ways of finding concepts for contemporary architectural design from the encounter with traditional culture, as exemplified in two Chinese projects. The purpose of the two examples is to clarify the specific design approaches applied to the projects, which could offer architects alternative ways of design, and also to demonstrate the connections between traditional Chinese philosophies and pragmatic aesthetics, and how they are embodied in the projects. Red Brick Art Museum demonstrates a design concept that is based in a pragmatic design method rather than envisaging a building form at the beginning. The design of Xiangshan Campus, China Academy of Art, means to present a concept that is concerned with bodily perceptions, “aesthetic sense” and everyday life, which is also derived from traditional ideologies concerning the body.

Finally, the concluding chapter provides a comparison between the two ways of meaning; discusses why there is, at times, a gap between concepts and actual perceptions; and stresses that architecture is a dynamic process of creation, so that form is not the purpose but the consequence of the design and also the dynamic process of everyday experience from which “aesthetic sense” can emerge. The chapter reclaims the design attitude which this research advocates – that architecture is not only about written concepts, and concepts should not only refer to visual effect or symbolic meaning, but rather, “pragmatic meaning” is the thing that makes a building essentially meaningful.

Chapter 1. Definition of the Two Ways of Meaning – "Conceptual Meaning" and "Pragmatic Meaning"

This chapter intends to explain what the two ways of meaning are, how they are generated (or emerge) in various ways and why they are labelled "conceptual" and "pragmatic". This will then form the basis for further case studies, in which the two kinds of meaning and the associations between them will be considered in relation to particular architectural designs.

1.1 What Is "Conceptual Meaning"?

It seems there is a rule in contemporary design competitions that each design proposal needs a concept, since a brilliant concept makes it more likely that the design will win the competition. Therefore, finding a concept is crucial for the architect in working out a competition proposal. Concepts such as the Jewish Museum's "Between the Lines" in Berlin and Centre Pompidou's "Cultural Liberation" both stand out as having developed appropriate ideas out of cultural circumstances and social desires, in contemporary times and in particular places, all of which contributed to the directions that the projects took.[19] Architects usually start to search for a concept at the beginning of the design, drawing on their thoughts, the brief and the circumstances of the site. The designing of the building is the way of searching for concepts. Concepts usually evolve out of the design and are confirmed at the end of the design work. Physical forms are produced based on the concept, such as the transparent facade of Centre Pompidou, which was designed to promote the information exchange, as to approach the idea of cultural liberation.

[19] See details of Jewish Museum, especially "Between the Lines", in this Chapter, and details of Centre Pompidou in Chapter 2.

1.1.1 Generated by the architect

"Conceptual meaning" is the meaning that develops from the architect's mind – from the synthetic process integrating the architect's personal preferences, the circumstances of the site and the complexities of the brief. This way of meaning as a creation of the architect's thought processes is usually developed at the design concept stage, presented in the form of design statements, diagrams, models, images or video films. Usually there is a description for each design proposal illustrating the innovations of the project, accompanied by a series of analytic diagrams and models for a better understanding of the concept. The presentation of the architect's final concept usually results from a long process of deliberation. During this time, the architect sets out to find the right ideas. There should be some preconditions that inspire him/her to initiate conceptual ideas, and those preconditions might come from his/her personal aesthetics; the demands of building functions, materials and techniques; social needs; and the analysis of the surrounding environment. A comprehensive consideration of these multiple conditions makes it possible for the architect to produce a concept, and the concept will keep evolving until the end of the design. Once the "conceptual meaning" has finally been established and inscribed in building forms, the architect's mission will have been accomplished. This conceptual way to have meaning is therefore achieved by virtue of the architect's mental creativity, based on a balanced evaluation of multiple factors. However, once the "conceptual meaning" has been worked out, it will not be able to be changed: the "conceptual meaning" is a fixed product of design ideas, rather than something that comes about through "emergent" events that could randomly happen in a space at any time.

Concepts seem a necessary component for the type of buildings that tend to achieve recognition as having cultural significance, because having articulated concepts enables those buildings to gain more public attention, so that their cultural significance will be better recognised. For example, Centre Pompidou, a conceptually innovative "hi-tech" project which meant to overturn the domination of elite culture and bring arts to the public, marked the start of a movement of cultural liberation, and consequently it has become a favourite place

of tourists and has attracted millions of visitors each year.[20] Moreover, eye-catching concepts can bring architects more chances to be noticed, therefore standing out in competitions, so the concept also seems to be an important selling point for the architect in seeking to win competitions, and is therefore beneficial for architects' personal development. Concepts sometimes also serve as selling points for cultural institutions to achieve success in the cultural market. In order to restore Paris's cultural place and to be in competition with New York, Centre Pompidou decided to offer a new tool for disseminating culture; the cultural identity of Paris has thus been rescued with the assistance of this innovative project Centre Pompidou.

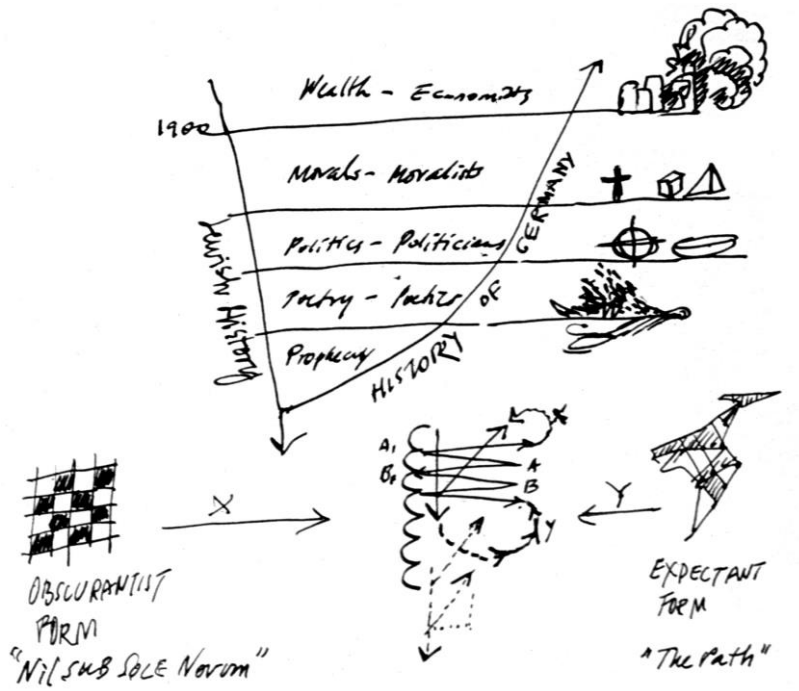

Figure 5. The shaping of the concept for the Jewish Museum (extension project): Libeskind's sketch of the parallel lines of Jewish and German histories.

[20] Philippe Bidaine (2011), *Centre Pompidou – Creation in the Heart of Paris*, Paris: Centre Pompidou, p. 7.

Figure 6. The extension project of the Jewish Museum, Danial Libeskind, Berlin, 2001.

Figure 7. The Reichstag renovation project: exterior view, Foster + Partners, Berlin, 1999.

Figure 8. The Reichstag renovation project: interior view, Foster + Partners, Berlin, 1999.

"Conceptual meaning" is sometimes created in response to ideas from a broader field according to architect's aesthetic preferences and social will and the requirements of the brief. Those ideas that the architect echoes are either from social, cultural and political values, or from aesthetics, theories and philosophies. These contextual values are identified and then transferred into architectural concepts as a means to present ambitious visions for a design, thus making the design more justified, more distinctive, or more likely to win competitions or gain public attention. Social-cultural value is often employed in architectural concepts to memorialise historic events or manifest a cultural identity. Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum extended upon the old Berlin German Museum, one of the foremost iconic projects of the 1990s, is one building which is responding to social-cultural values. The concept Libeskind proposed is known as "Between the Lines", hoping to represent the connection between the Germans and Jews. The generated "conceptual meaning" was transplanted to and is strongly reflected by building forms.[21] This meaning is represented in building forms through Libeskind's design of a range of features, including slight misalignment of walls, sloping floors, play of dark and light, and angular slashes of window. The zigzag pattern throughout the museum is repeatedly confronted by the voids. The voids are closed-off spaces which visitors can see but have no access to, designed to represent trauma and loss. Also, the design for the scar-like windows has been described as representing "linkages of sites of significance for Jewish cultural figures – such as Walter Benjamin and Mies van der Rohe - drawn across a pre-war map of Berlin", and the crosses on the zinc façade as intended to compel visitors to think about the links between the cross and the persecution suffered by Jewish people.[22]

Political attitudes can at times be considered in architectural design. This is because architecture has the power to present political values. Deyan Sudjic sees architecture as a political art.[23] Political authorities like to search and exercise an aesthetic control, which can represent their political values in a symbolic way. Architectural form has sometimes been

[21] Daniel Libeskind (2001), *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 23.

[22] Paul Jones (2011), *The Sociology of Architecture*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 38–40.

[23] Deyan Sudjic (1986), *Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, James Stirling: New Directions in British Architecture*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 63.

employed by political authorities in a "scapegoat" role as a way of representing political power. Transparency and openness are the most widespread themes in the design community that contemporary parliaments prefer to embody, as these are considered as the symbols of democracy. One example is the Reichstag renovation project in Berlin, where "a great, democratic light-bulb sits in triumph over the past", opposed to its classicism. The original Reichstag reminded the nation of Hitler's power and the "dark side of imperial bombast".[24] Germans decided to keep these signs of their past, but at the same time to transform them. They chose Norman Foster, who was thought to be the ideal in designing icons of "lightness, technological supremacy" and "openness". Since the reconstruction of the building was completed, people have been welcome to access it. The public can stroll to the top along a walkway, look out at the vistas of the city and watch their representatives debating in the main chamber below.[25] The Reichstag renovation is not the only parliament seeking to show a welcome and transparency to the public: also open and accessible are London City Hall, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish parliament.

Social changes can also be reflected in architectural design. The design of Centre Pompidou explores the ideas of social inclusiveness. This exploration reflects social change in the contemporary age, when mass culture and public engagement are taken as greater concerns. Instead of serving elites only, the arts have become public. Arts are accessible for all and cultural buildings become places where all social groups encounter each other.

Besides bringing social values into "conceptual meaning", some architects prefer to find types of meaning from existing theories or philosophies. The realisation of a certain theory in an actual project can be seen as the success of the architect's experimental practice. One example is the realisation of deconstruction in the project Parc de la Villette.[26] Deconstruction was originally a theory of linguistic analysis in the 1960s that overturned all previous ideas of

[24] Charles Jencks (2005), *The Iconic Building: The Power of Enigma*, London: Frances Lincoln Ltd, pp. 50-51.

[25] Ibid.

[26] See details of Parc de la Villette in Chapter 3.

structuralism and logocentrism by demonstrating the instability of meaning in the text, and often the self-contradiction.[27] Bernard Tschumi promptly caught this philosophical turn and strived to apply the theory to architectural practice. Thus, Parc de la Villette, taking the deconstructive ideas of disjunction, superimposition and dissociation into its spatial design, could be seen as the architect's trial response to linguistic theories in architecture.

Design concepts can also come from the technical rather than the symbolic aspects of construction, the meaning of the building being found in its fundamental structure, materials and constructional techniques. Mies van der Rohe could be seen as a representative architect, whose work is nothing less than the exploration of aesthetic propositions, but with results that are always tectonically expressed. He did not like the word "design". He believed that architects should rather use the word "building" and that the best results would come from the "art of building".[28] His stress on the tactility of materials, as revealed under light, is found throughout his projects. Mies' glass skyscrapers may well allow us to recognise his capacity to treat the glass as if it were a kind of transparent stone: the Seagram Building may be the one that most perfectly shows this. Though it seems like Mies was paying close attention to the visual performance of building forms, yet he still based these forms on a tectonic point of view, rather than pure aesthetic speculations; this can be supported by a piece of his aphoristic text: "essentially our task is to free the practice of building from the control of the aesthetics speculators and restore it to what it should be: building".[29]

For architects such as Peter Zumthor, "conceptual meaning" can be discovered in a building's sensuous connections to life. To Zumthor, buildings can have a beautiful silence that is associated with attributes such as "composure, self-evidence, durability, presence, and integrity, and with warmth and sensuousness as well; a building that is being itself, being a building, not representing anything, just being".[30] The being of the building, as stated by

[27] Jorge Glusberg (1991), *Deconstruction: A Student Guide*, London: Academy Editions, p. 7.

[28] Kenneth Frampton (1995), *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 159.

[29] Ibid., p. 161.

[30] Anca Mitrache (2012), "Ornamental Art and Architectural Decoration", *Social and Behavioural*

Zumthor, can be sensitively perceived by the body. When one comes across a building, if one's body is actively and intuitively in contact with the space in which the body is situated, the body will immediately realise the presence of the building; thus, at that point, one might perceive the being of the building. In this sense, the body is linked to the materiality of the building, since the sense of materiality depends on the body's understanding of surroundings. One of Zumthor's smallest projects, the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, clearly shows the way that he attempts to connect the sensuousness of the body with the materiality of the building. The chapel lies in Germany's landscape and was constructed by local farmers who wanted to honour their patron saint, Bruder Klaus of the 15th century. What the body comes across within this small chapel is a series of carefully designed spaces, structures and materials, which come from unique construction methods. The construction began with a wigwam made of 112 tree trunks. Upon completion of the frame, layers of concrete were poured and rammed on the top of the existing surface, each around 50 cm thick. When all 24 layers of concrete had set, the wooden frame was set on fire, leaving behind a hollowed blackened cavity and charred walls. When one enters the chapel through the triangular entrance, the obvious directionality of the wall leads the eye upward to the point where the roof is open to the sky and, at night, the stars. This opening controls the indoor climate in the chapel. Sunlight, air and rain penetrate the opening and create a very specific micro-climate and experience based on time of day and season. The exterior formwork was installed and fixed to the interior formwork of logs by 350 steel pipes. After the interior logs were burnt and the all formwork was removed, 350 holes remained, linking the inside to the outside.[31] Daylight enters the chapel through these holes located in the concrete walls. These holes were later covered with small hemispheres of blown glass that give a special sense to the point where light enters. A very sombre and reflective feeling is aroused during one's encounter with the chapel that makes the building one of the most remarkable pieces of religious space.[32]

Sciences, vol. 51, pp. 567–572, p. 569.

[31] The construction techniques of the wall see figure 10.

[32] Megan Sveiven (2011), *Bruder Klaus Field Chapel/Peter Zumthor* [Online], available at: http://www.archdaily.com/106352/bruder-klaus-field-chapel-peter-zumthor (Accessed: 21 December

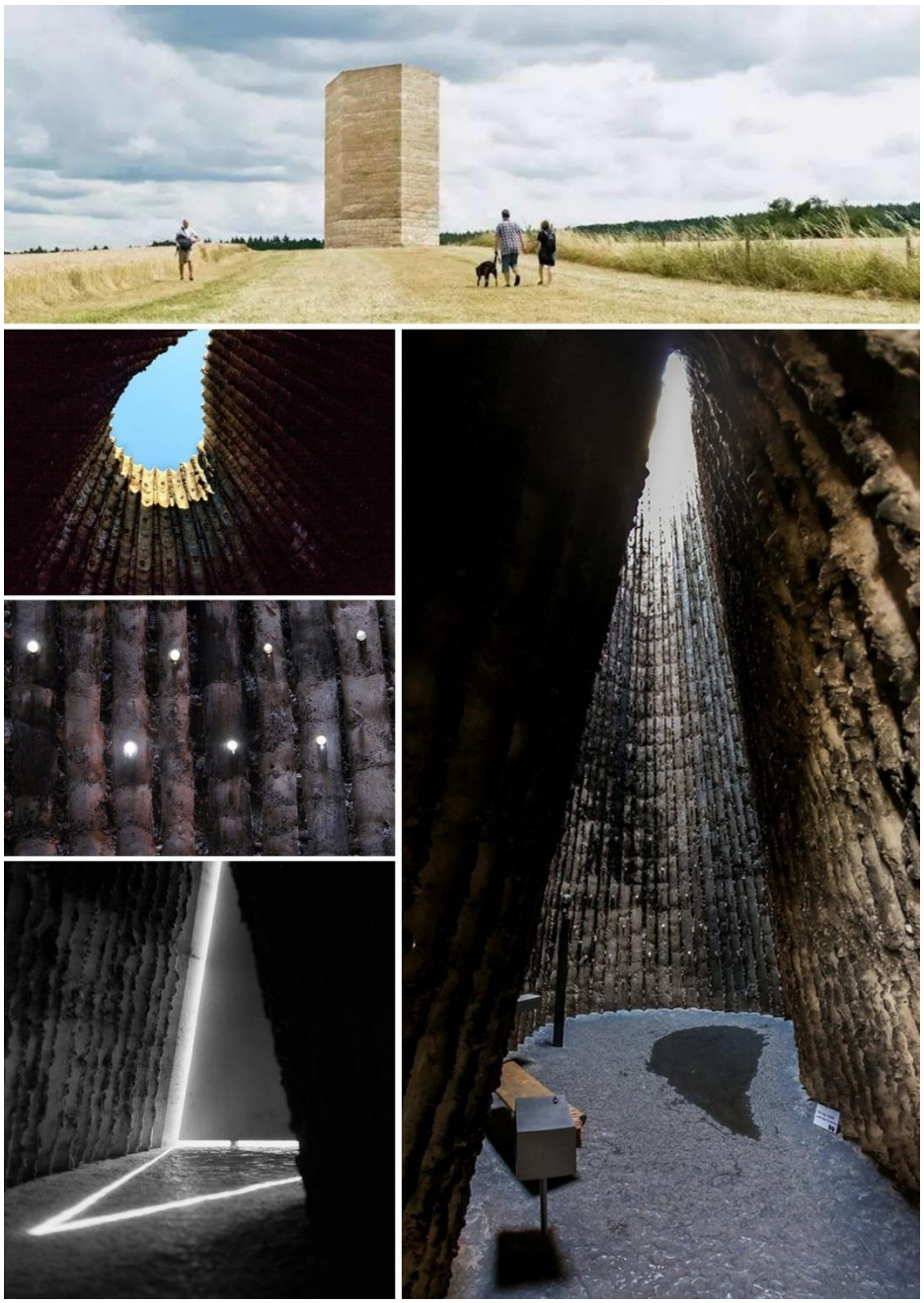

Figure 9. Bruder Klaus Field Chapel – the attempt to find meaning in the building's sensuous connections to life, Peter Zumthor, Mechernich, 2007.

2016).

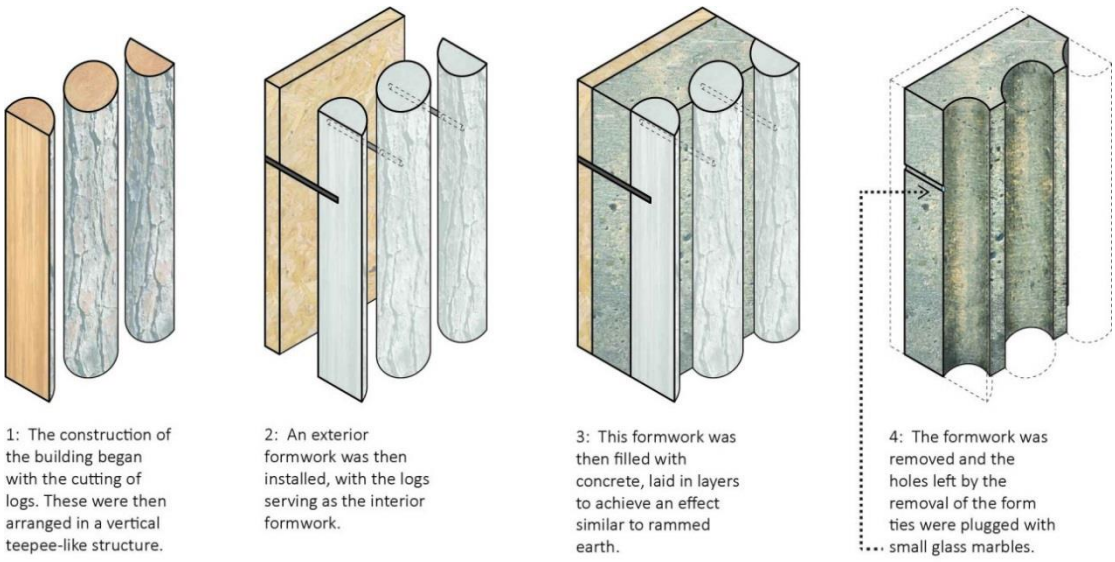

Figure 10. The construction techniques of the wall of Bruder Klaus Field Chapel.

Hence, “conceptual meaning” is a way of developing meaning from the architect’s mind, from his/her personal creation of the theme of a design in response to his aesthetic interests; the circumstances of the site; social, cultural and political necessities; and the requirements of the brief. This way of meaning is generative and unchangeable. It is created or discovered by the architect, and once the architect has accomplished the design the meaning will be completely formed and will never be modified. The architect seeks to generate meanings by encountering culture, social values, aesthetic theories, materials and techniques, and the sensuousness of the body, and brings them into the designing of building forms, so that building forms become the architect’s physical products of the “conceptual meaning”. In addition, architects are interested in disseminating their concepts through public media such as publications, lectures and exhibitions, as these are effective ways to gain more awareness in the field of architecture. The meanings are disseminated through public media to audiences as design concepts in the form of texts, diagrams, images, videos, models, etc. The project introduction for Sage Gateshead music centre on Foster + Partners’ website, where plenty of drawings and diagrams are presented indicating the concept behind the design, is one example that shows how the architect tries to disseminate concepts through public media.

It is interesting to look at the architect’s search for a concept from the point of view of Bourdieu’s theory of cultural production. This theory indicates that actors and institutions in

the architectural field construct arbitrary values with their particular capacities in order to approach a kind of aesthetic distinction. As Bourdieu points out, “any act of cultural production implies an affirmation of its claim to cultural legitimacy”, and architects struggle to reinforce and improve their legitimate positions in the field of architecture, to define themselves as distinctive, and to search for consecration.[33] In the field of architectural practice, an architect usually finds meaning from culture, social values, aesthetic theories, materials, techniques and bodily perceptions, and dedicates those values to the shaping of the design concept, so that the design becomes a sort of reflection of those values. Therefore, from Bourdieu’s perspective, the architect’s effort to find meaning for a building might be also a way of making aesthetic distinctions in the field of architecture.

Cultural buildings with articulated “concepts” are able to play a significant role in signifying the cultural significance they are carrying, and for those cultural buildings with iconic status which have a greater chance of being noticed, the “conceptual meaning” is more likely to be disseminated. For example, the iconic status of Centre Pompidou brings these buildings more public attention, so that more people will be attracted and come to visit. As more events and activities take place in the buildings, the concepts of promoting social inclusion and cultural liberation are more likely to be approached. High-profile architects are more interested in obtaining iconic commissions, as these enable them to work in a more autonomous realm where their personal thoughts about building forms can be expressed more freely. Commissioners of iconic projects are also interested in having high-profile architects in charge, since those architects are more sophisticated in meaning production and their reputation is valuable and can be transferred to the reputation of the building.

Success in design competitions can bring success and personal development to unknown architects. The competition for the design of Centre Pompidou was anonymous and was not reserved for “invitees”. It was open to all architects, regardless of age, experience or nationality;

[33] Helena Webster (2011), *Bourdieu for Architects*, Abingdon, Oxon, & New York: Routledge, p. 77.

talent and creativity would be the key criteria.[34] When Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers were awarded the commission for Centre Pompidou in the early 1970s, they were young and not so famous internationally. However, after they were commissioned for this project, they soon gained world-wide fame and started fruitful careers in architectural practice. Their best-known buildings were mostly built in the 1980s and 1990s, and they are now both world-class architects.[35] The winning of Centre Pompidou opened up a new era in their works and initiated an international dimension to their careers. Therefore, it is clear that architects can gain the chance to improve their personal capital through the meaning production of iconic buildings, and at the same time the cultural significance of the buildings can be reinforced by the engagement of high-profile architects. Thus it seems the two parties can both gain benefits from the development of iconic buildings.

1.1.2 Concept is an iconic sign

The understanding of a "sign" is based on the experience of what one knows and what one observes. When one notices a dark cloud in the sky, the dark cloud is a sign of impending rain. When one sees a bench, one will know it is a place to sit, and the provision of a place to sit makes the bench a sign of welcome or ease; but when one has noticed that the bench looks out over a field with a good view, the bench will become a sign of the recognised value of that view. When one sees a large area of lawn on a sunny day, one will imagine it would be a wonderful place for a picnic, a dancing party or a football game, so that the lawn might become the sign of those particular events; and if one notices a rock of particular aesthetic interest

[34] Bidaine*, Centre Pompidou*, p. 16.

[35] Main projects of Renzo Piano: the Knasai International Airport in Osaka (1988–1994); the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea (1991–1998); the Potzdamer Platz in Berlin (1992–2000); the auditorium of the Music Park in Rome (1994–2002); the Paul Klee Centre in Berns (1998–2005); and the Cité Internatinale in Lyon (1998–2006).

Main projects of Richard Rogers: the Lloyd's Building in London (1979–1986); the Tribunal de Grande Instance of Bordeaux (1992–1998); the seat of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (1989–1995); the Millennium Dome in London (1999); Terminal 4 at Madrid-Barajas International Airport (1997–2005); the new building for the National Assembly of Wales (1998–2005).

placed in a garden, one might find that the rock signifies “natural environment”, as it evokes the mental image of a mountain. Thus, it seems a sign can sometimes point directly to something which the sign stands for, while at other times a sign can make something happen by interacting with a participant’s creativity.

There are three elements involved in a sign situation – in Charles Sanders Peirce’s terms, a “sign”, an “object” which the sign stands for, and an effect, the idea in people’s minds, an “interpretant”. A sign is, as Peirce points out, something which stands in such a triadic relation to its object as to be capable of determining its interpretant.[36] The object determines a sign, and the sign determines an idea in people’s minds. The big lawn in the sunshine is a physical object; when people see it and realise that it could be a lovely place for pleasure, the lawn becomes a sign of this pleasure in their minds. The idea of doing something for pleasure is the effect which the object (lawn) creates for people. However, not all signs have this completely triadic relationship of object, sign and interpretant – the way in which these three elements are bound together does not exist in any complex of dyadic relations. There are three types of signs – icon, index and symbol. Only the symbol has a triadic relationship, whereas the other two have incomplete triadic relationships. The reason a symbol is seen as having a complete triadic relationship is that the relations between the symbolic sign and its object are dependent on a knower’s creativity, while the relations between incomplete signs and their objects are independent of their knower.

A symbolic sign occurs only when the way in which the sign is related to its object in consequence of a knower’s mental association depends upon the previous experience or habits of the knower. A symbolic sign occurs when something is used or understood, without regard to the motives which originally governed the occurrence of the symbolic sign.[37] Therefore, the lawn is a symbol to the knower, because the lawn does not directly mean a football field or a dancing place, but rather it is the user (knower) who associates the lawn

[36] Charles S. Peirce (1932), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Volume 2)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 156.

[37] Ibid., p. 172.

(object) with a place of pleasure (sign). Moreover, Peirce points out that some words are examples of a symbol, – such as "marriage", because the word supposes that we are able to imagine actual events related to the idea of marriage.[38]

If one sign is called an index, the relation of the indexical sign to its objects does not depend on the knower's creativity either, but there should be a dynamic connection between the sign and its object. A pointing finger is an indexical sign. There is a direct relation between the finger and what the finger points at. The connection between the finger and the pointed-at object already exists for the knower: the knower has to have previously learned that the pointing finger is "pointing", before he/she can recognise what the it points at. Thus, this connection between the pointing finger and the pointed-at object is a cultural convention which exists prior to the knower's reaction to a pointing finger. Dark smoke coming from a house could be an indexical sign that means the house might be on fire, as there is a causal relation between smoke and fire which is already understood by the knower. When we respond directly to surrounding facts, this is also when an indexical sign occurs. Peirce points out that when we take action we are always "bumbling up against hard fact".[39] When we come across any given thing, we will have a sense of resistance or a sense of effort, so that we passively experience it as something which forces our experience in a particular direction. If we see something moving quickly towards us, we will unconsciously defend ourselves against it in case it poses a threat. For example, if there is a car coming towards us, we will immediately take action to avoid the car. So the car forces our experience and here we have a sense of resistance. When we are tired and we find a bench by the path, we will be compelled to take a seat. The bench too induces us to take action and here we have a sense of the effort used to approach the bench. These things which are seen to force our experience are indexical signs. Moreover, a long passage could be an indexical sign, which compels our bodies to go through it; a bedroom could also be an indexical sign if we are passively aware that it is a place where

[38] Ibid., p. 168.

[39] Charles S. Peirce (1931), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Volume 1)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 162.

the most private aspects of life can take place.

If any particular sign is seen as an icon, the relationship between object and sign lies in their similarity. If something is fit to be a substitute for an object that it resembles – for example, an image of the object, or an idea of the object – that thing is an iconic sign.[40] A drawing of a tree is an iconic sign of the real tree. They are already similar in image without requiring any mental creation on the part of the knower.

Therefore, the sign is completely triadic when the sign–object relationship depends on the engagement of the knower/user, whereas the sign is incompletely triadic when the sign–object relationship does not rely on the mental creativity of the knower/user. A triadic sign has to be produced by the knower/user – when the knower attaches significance to something in the actual world with references to their own life and experiences, a symbolic sign might be created. In contrast, an incomplete triadic sign is something that is used by the knower/user; in this case, if there is merely a relationship of resemblance between sign and object, the sign is an icon, whereas if there is a direct physical connection between sign and object, the sign is an index.[41]

The "conceptual meaning" generated by architects is an example of an iconic sign. The idea generated from the architect's mind is the interpretant, and the presentation of a design – such as texts, diagrams, models, videos or images as well as actual building forms – is the object where "conceptual meaning" resides. To understand an architect's "conceptual meaning", it is not necessary for one to use one's own creativity. For instance, in an exhibition where an architectural design is on display, when viewers see or read the presentations of the design (object), these presentations will become iconic signs and bring viewers an understanding of the meaning of the design (interpretant). Viewers gain "conceptual meaning" from these presentations without their own effort of creation. The relation between the design and the concept (object and sign) lies in their resemblance. For example, when Bernard

[40] Peirce, *Collected Papers (Volume 2*), p. 157.

[41] John Joseph Fitzgerald (1966), *Peirce's Theory of Signs as Foundation for Pragmatism*, The Hague: Mouton, pp. 39–44.

Tschumi was working on Parc de la Villette, he first came up with an image of three disjunctive systems of points, lines and surfaces as the design concept. Based on this conceptual idea, the physical space of the park was generated, and the spatial pattern of the park resembles the imagined spatial system that Tschumi had originally conceived, so that Tschumi's intended "conceptual meaning" is embedded in the design of the park.

Peirce asserts that "the only way of directly communicating an idea is by means of an icon".[42] In architecture, the "conceptual meaning" is able to be disseminated by means of architectural presentations of design ideas. Usually the architect starts to have ideas (the interpretant of an iconic sign) in mind at the beginning of a design. These ideas evolve as the design moves on, and they are accomplished and are eventually known as the design concept, and this is where "conceptual meaning" lies. The architect designs physical spaces based on the concept. After the building has been constructed, hopefully people are able to apprehend the architect's idea according to the physical spaces they engage with, as well as having their own ways of using the spaces. Physical spaces can be seen as indices when people use the space in accordance with the architect's definition of it beforehand, such as when people use a classroom for lecturing, use stairs and passages for passing from one level or room in a building to another, or use a bench for sitting. These places are seen as indices because the use of them has a direct connection with the function defined by the architect, and does not depend on users' own creativity – the function and use of a certain place is defined prior to users' actions. Alternatively, physical spaces can be seen as symbols when people use them according to their own wishes, derived from their own needs and creativity, such as using a lawn for a dancing party, steps for sitting or a sloping ground for napping. Hence, the concept is an iconic sign; a physical space can be an index when people follow the architect's intentions, or a symbol when people produce meanings in their own ways.

The "interpretant" can be divided into three categories – the immediate, the dynamical and the final interpretant.[43] Where the interpretant can be understood through the sign itself, this

[42] Peirce, *Collected Papers (Volume 2*), p. 158.

[43] The concept of the "immediate interpretant" is related to that of "conceptual meaning" and is discussed here, while the terms "dynamical interpretant" and "final interpretant" refer to practical

is an immediate interpretant and this is where the iconic sign exists. This kind of interpretant requires that each sign must have its own peculiar interpretability before it reaches any later knower. So the knower does not need to make any effort to produce the interpretant in this case, but rather takes the idea and uses it straight away.[44] The architectural concept is proposed by the architect, so that the "conceptual meaning" exists prior to and independent from the knower's understanding of the concept and the building. The "conceptual meaning" is therefore an immediate interpretant – it is interpretable before it reaches any later knower and independent from the knower's individual creativity. People can reach "conceptual meaning" by viewing design statements, images, diagrams and photos of the building without any active creation according to actual circumstances.

There are two kinds of meaning in a sign – the internal meaning and the external meaning.[45] The internal meaning of an idea is seen as the achievement of its own purpose, prior to any other ideas or actions, whereas the external meaning requires outer factors. Common sense is the fundamental function of the external meaning. The feature of resemblance makes an icon a sign that has internal meaning: an iconic sign does not rely on the effort of future knowers/users to associate sign with object, and thus sign and object are related without any external meaning derived from common sense or future developments. The design of a building resembles the concept generated in the architect's mind. The concept could only have internal meaning, if it is subjectively produced by the architect, independent from any common sense or creativity of later users. The concept is achieved by the architect's finding of "conceptual meaning". This meaning will then be transferred into building forms and might be disseminated through design competitions, exhibitions or publications. "Conceptual meaning" is a form of meaning derived from the architect's creativity; it always rejects any future modification or development by users, as it always tends to be completely fulfilled by the

effects and so are more related to "pragmatic meaning", which will be explained in the next section of the chapter.

[44] Fitzgerald, *Peirce's Theory*, p. 76.

[45] Fitzgerald, *Peirce's Theory*, p. 85.

architect.

When an architect is working on a design, the intended ideas are usually described by the architect in such formulations as “I would like to get people have a feeling of …”, “I want to explore my design philosophy of … by doing experiments in this project”, “I want to make it a place for the remembrance of …” and so on. These intended ideas are iconic signs, whereas the final design scheme (the object) acts as the resemblance of those intentions. As stated above, an iconic sign (concept) has a fixed interpretation independent from the knower/user. After the concept has been transferred into building forms, the building forms become the object of the concept, and the building forms and the concept exist in a relationship of resemblance, such as the resemblance between the zigzag spatial pattern and scar-like windows in the Jewish Museum and the conflictual history of relations between Jewish and German people, or the opening in the roof of the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel being penetrable by sunlight, rain and air in resemblance with the building’s intended sensuous connections to life. This resemblance that links building forms and concepts usually only exists in the architect’s mind, but we can sometimes be made aware of the resemblance and understand the concepts from the architect’s interpretation as presented in architectural media.

However, as concepts can be interpreted by architects using texts, images, models, drawings and photos of building forms without the engagement of future users, the independence of the architect’s production of “conceptual meaning” can bring negatives to architecture. For example, many abstract visual images can be found in architectural magazines interpreting architects’ conceptual ideas. These images do not include any people or activity: they are merely beautiful perspectives from chosen viewpoints, at times accessorised by some illustrations of the design concepts. It is also interesting to note that there are architects in favour of taking part in exhibitions with their conceptual design works. The Venice Biennale of Architecture is one of the most influential world-wide exhibitions, held every two years. Arranged in different pavilions with different individual themes, this is a good opportunity for new concepts to be showcased. These are displays of architects’ categorised conceptual meanings, and the exhibition acts as an exclusive space where architects play among themselves. This evidence implies that some architects seem to prefer working in a more

autonomous field where they might generate arbitrary meanings without considering all circumstances pragmatically. In contrast, a good architect might approach a commission with the intention of finding out the function of the building, the place where it is to be built, the culture, the community, the techniques and materials, and only then work out a concept and a design that tries to deal with all of these things.

Concept and design are the two elements involved in the situation of an iconic sign – concept is the sign and design is the object. The process of design is one of the building being given form, but it is also the way in which “conceptual meaning” is created and materialised into physical objects. Once a building has been accomplished, though the concept will be fixed, the building forms will have dynamic effects on users. As a result, building forms act as something intermediate between the ideas of the architects and the actual effects on users. Therefore, a design is a process of searching for “conceptual meaning” and simultaneously a process of giving form to a building, and the actual effects of the building on users will occur when the building is in practical use. When users follow the architect’s definition of a space, the space acts as an indexical sign, while when users produce their own meaning for a space, the space becomes a symbolic sign to them.

The concept generated by the architect is an iconic sign, while the design of the building is the physical object the iconic sign denotes. However, the iconic sign does not have any actual effect in the practical dimension. Once the building has been constructed, “pragmatic meaning” will be produced from the actual experience of users within the space. How the space functions and how people perceive it are the actual effects a building creates, and this is where “pragmatic meaning” develops. The ways in which meanings are produced are different: “conceptual meaning” is generated in the architect’s mind while “pragmatic meaning” emerges from users’ actual experience. It is in this sense that a building acts as something intermediate: it is the physical outcome of “conceptual meaning” as well as the place in which “pragmatic meaning” occurs – it is the product of the architect’s intention and the reception of the user’s meaning exploration.

Since the concept and the process of designing a building are determined by the architect, but

the effect on users depends on users' understandings, there is sometimes a mismatch between the architect's intentions and what users perceive, or between what the space was meant to be and how it is actually used. The building can mean something different to users from that to the architect. An architect achieves "conceptual meaning" in the process of designing a building and the design implies the meaning the architect has sought for. To architects, the meaning of a building is found in the ideas they have generated, but to users, meanings are something emerging from their experience in actual spaces.

Users are at times able to apprehend the meaning the architect intended to express. For example, people understand the plaza in front of Centre Pompidou as an urban space for flexible use – resting, sitting, relaxing and playing. This lively picture is in line with the architect's idea of making an open urban space for the Les Halles area, though this plaza does not mean the same to all users since people have different interpretations according to their different roles and needs. However, at other times people find that it is harder to recognise an architect's "conceptual meaning" in their experience of actual spaces. An example is the Chinese architect Wang Shu, whose texts sometimes seem to convey not a form of knowledge that is available for all to understand, but only his own desire to play within his fantasy world. Wang does not always explain his work but only interprets. Explanation is rational and authoritative, and restrains possibility, whereas interpretation gives him room to discover more possibility and deeper meaning in his work. But at the same time, this makes his ideas obscure and unfathomable to others.

One interior design project, known as "Eight Unliveable Houses", a series of lamp settings, is a representation of Wang's unfathomable design philosophy. "Eight Unliveable Houses" is a small interior design at Wang Shu's own flat. This is a small two-bedroom flat, 50 m^2 in area. In Wang's opinion, living in a garden setting is a timeless necessity for Chinese "men of letters", as a garden can highlight the poetry of everyday life, thus inspiring them in aesthetic creation. Thus, Wang decided to "landscape" his small living space. He did not borrow any piece from traditional gardens straightforwardly, but rather he created a series of images representing the poetic sense of traditional gardens. The creation of "Eight Unliveable Houses" aimed to provide more poetic images for Wang's personal "garden". Eight wooden lamp settings,

representing the eight unliveable houses, are placed at every corner of the flat – roof, wall and floor. Those wooden lamp settings represent the images of different forms of houses scattered in a traditional garden. With all lamp settings in place, eight sorts of magical light that come out from them provide a distinct sense of beauty to this interior "garden". Both the interior design project and "Eight Unliveable Houses" are included in one of Wang's books, *The Beginning of Design*.[46] This is not a book which merely explains his design projects; more essentially, it states his aesthetic preferences, design philosophies and criticism on contemporary architecture. One is hardly able to realise Wang's concept of the interior "garden" solely by visiting his flat, but one is possibly able to understand his poetic ideas, at least in part, from his texts.

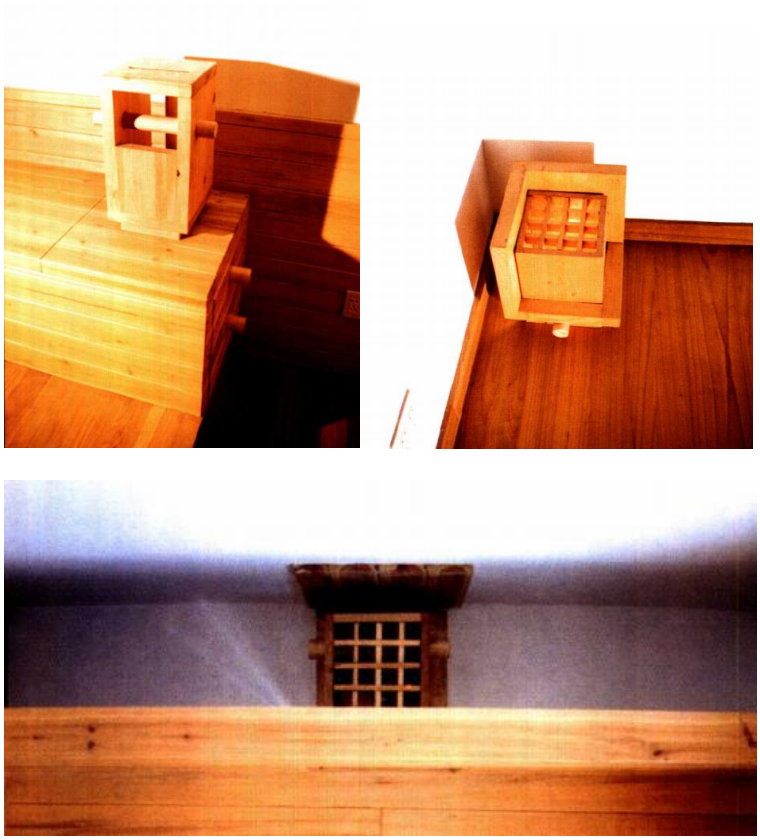

Figure 11. Three of the lamp settings from "Eight Unliveable Houses", Wang Shu, Hangzhou, late 1990s.

[46] Shu Wang (2002), *The Beginning of Design 设计的开始*, Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press.

1.1.3 The reason architects like making concepts from a "fine art" perspective

The pursuit of concept could be attributed to the cult of individual thoughts in the architectural field and the autonomy of architecture. It seems that architecture has long treated itself as an arrogant profession, and the concept seems important for those architects who use it to assert their individual philosophies. Especially those who are considered to be struggling in a more autonomous design faction are more inclined to produce pure art works, concern themselves with pure aesthetics and set codes of symbolic criteria, apart from daily life.[47] These architects attempt to set themselves up as the only judge of the design, exclude any interaction with non-professional agency and tend to deliver to users perfectly finished art-like buildings which primarily aim to satisfy the architect's own personal aesthetic tastes. Indeed, perfectly finished art-like architecture with well-packaged "conceptual meaning" might have considerable value in the professional realm of architecture; however, it will be problematic if the concept is concerned with visual image only, plays a dictatorial role in the design process, ignores basic requirements and even goes against empirical values.

It is important to ask why some architects are fascinated with art-like buildings. Brand thinks that the problem with these architects is that they are keen to treat themselves as artists, and they see fine art as the aesthetic aspiration of architecture.[48] In the desire to make a building more visually focused and attractive, it becomes more crucial to concentrate on its exterior, and "conceptual meaning" is more likely to be connected with the visual appearance of architecture, especially in the case of so-called iconic buildings. Iconic buildings are positioned relative to visual consumers, not only the visitors to the buildings themselves but the viewers of mediated images in press, television or film. Positioning architecture in relation to the visual consumer means that buildings end up being designed from the outside in, from "the tourist gaze".[49] The surface appearance and visual effect of iconic buildings can contribute to

[47] Garry Stevens (1998), *The Favored Circle: The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 91–94.

[48] Stewart Brand (1994), *How Buildings Learn: What Happens after They're Built*, New York: Viking, p. 54.

[49] John Urry & Jonas Larsen (1990), *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London & Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

constructing and reinforcing tourists' visual preferences, so that iconic buildings become incorporated into a broader consumption of culture. In recent times there has been a trend towards attempting to embed iconic architecture in particular urban regeneration projects with the collaboration of "star architects".[50]

Furthermore, as Brand notes, the history of architecture is the history of the transformation of facades and styles.[51] Looking at recent architectural movements, it can be seen that they are mostly about stylistic changes. The modernist movement was about the struggle to overthrow the established Beaux-Arts architecture. Although it started as the solution to house shortage problems after the world wars, it was soon aestheticised by the Bauhaus movement and became an international style that architects played with.[52] During the 1960s, Venturi attacked the simplicity of modernism, and encouraged architects to be exterior decorators. He took the easy path away from the complex responsibility of architecture and back to the simple debate about style. By the 1980s, deconstruction had swept architecture departments with its self-conscious approach of fragmenting itself into shards. By the early 1990s, architecture had gone through neo-modernism, neo-classicism and neo-rationalism, but all of these changes are about debates on exterior forms, either borrowing traditional decorated symbols and incorporating them into new functional building façades or adhering to modern styles.[53] Therefore, Brand concludes that the history of architecture is the history of façades, and that all the efforts that push architecture to move on, to develop and to transform are serving the wrong people – the viewers instead of the people who use a building. Geoffrey Scott claims that this type of criticism in architecture, that focuses on forms and styles, always lays down some "law" of architectural taste for the sake of simplicity; however, he asserts that good design in architecture should express the function that the building is intended to fulfil and the facts of its construction, or reflect the life of its particular civilisation.

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[50] Paul Jones (2011), *The Sociology of Architecture*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p. 116.

[51] Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, p. 56.

[52] Stevens, *The Favored Circle*, pp. 103–105.

[53] Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, pp. 56–57.

There should in fact be complex reasons lying behind the shaping of any particular architectural style, which should relate to the practical needs of structural principles and social effects, rather than simply to aesthetic tastes and preferences. This is, as Scott states, the architecture of humanism.[54]

It seems that the favouring of visual conception is one architectural habitus. Pierre Bourdieu's term "habitus" refers to the "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" that produces practices which tend to reinforce the regularities of that generative principle.[55] The favouring of visual conception and the possession of visual skills are the installed principles that effect architectural practice which in turn reinforces the installed principles. Those architects who possess architectural habitus are more likely to survive in architectural competitions. Architectural photography in magazines and visual skills training at architectural schools are the methods through which architecture's habitus of visual conception is maintained. In architectural award and competition systems, the virtual image is the only factor to take into consideration before making a judgement on the winner. This requires architects to produce good-looking images rather than designing a building that will be well used. After a building has been constructed, photographic images of its architecture will be published in magazines, but most of these photos will be perfectly composed shots statically presenting the physical forms of the building. These lifeless pictures squeeze architectural appreciation into a narrow and simple area of visual judgement. Architecture magazines consist mainly of stylised colour photographs and newly built or designed buildings; they seldom interview users or clients, or criticise buildings except from an artistic point of view. The schools of architecture focus primarily on visual skills training, such as rendering, modelling, drawing, stylistic analysis and expressions, and perspective photography; their emphasis discourages inquiries about the everyday and specific living issues which arise in

[54] Geoffrey Scott (1965), *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, pp. 18–23.

[55] Pierre Bourdieu (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, UK, & New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 78.

actual spaces.[56]

The tradition of considering architecture as art is associated with the development of the modern system of fine arts, originating from the Italian Renaissance. In the article "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics", Paul Oskar Kristeller clarifies that the modern system of fine arts comprises five "nuclei" of fine arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry.[57] This conception of fine arts won universal consensus in the 18th century and was subsequently adopted as established orthodoxy among historians and philosophies of arts. In Kristeller's reading the ancient, medieval and early Renaissance thinkers did not group the fine arts in the same way as modern thinking does. For example, neither Plato nor Aristotle thought that architecture counted as an art; nor did medieval thinkers, although they did include in their conception of fine arts shoemaking, cooking, juggling and grammar, along with painting, sculpture, poetry and music.[58] We can regard crafts or sciences as falling under the rubric of arts in ancient times. Since the Renaissance, artists' status started to change; painters, sculptors and architects tended to distinguish themselves from craftsmen, defining themselves as liberal artists whose art works were demonstrated through ideas and contemplation rather than manual work. The autonomy of architecture can be derived from this time, when apprentice-trained builders began to separate into two professions – designers and builders – which offered the designers more freedom to engage with visionary concepts, which could be easily presented in drawings. Architects gained new and higher status as they were considered to be bound up more with intellectual than with manual labour. This social value that appreciates intellectual labour more than manual labour is closely associated with the neo-platonic ideas which grew during the Renaissance.

Kristeller argues that the modern system of fine arts was not complete until the mid-18th century, in the work of Charles Batteux. Batteux identified three classes of arts: "those that

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[56] Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, pp. 70–71.

[57] Paul Oskar Kristeller (1990), "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics", in *Renaissance Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 163–227, p. 165.

[58] James O. Young (2015), "The Ancient and Modern System of the Arts", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 55 (1), pp. 1–17, p. 1.

simply minister to our needs (the mechanical arts); those whose aim is pleasure (beaux-arts); and those that combine utility and pleasure (eloquence and architecture)". [59] Though architecture is considered to have the purposes of both pleasure and utility, its involvement in the system of fine arts gives it considerable influence on the recognition of architecture as an art for visual pleasure, akin to painting and sculpture. The recognition of architecture as an art isolates it from manual skills, the process of making, turning it into a process of conception, such that architectural appreciation requires watching and contemplation rather than experiencing.

Batteux did not create the modern system; it evolved over a period of time. One important step towards the modern concept of fine arts is Giorgio Vasari's conception of *disegno* in the 16th century.[60] The term "design" originates from the Italian word *disegno*, which originally means drawing. *Disegno* implies the connection between design, ideas and drawing. Design can be seen as the realisation of intellectual ideas, while drawings can be the visual presentations of the design. The ideas are immaterial, considered to be higher than material, as the intellectual is superior to manual labour. This is the essence of platonic theories of ancient Greece and it was revived in the Italian Renaissance. The key to a design is its conceptual idea and the visual way in which this is expressed. Intellectual thinking and training in drawing skills is essential for designers. Architecture is the only fine art that refers to design. The consideration of architecture as design means to associate it with immaterial ideas, as opposed to building or actual experience. Therefore, the architect's pursuit of a design concept, especially from a visual art perspective, is part of a tradition going back to the 16th century. Since then, the architect has been moving away from the accumulated knowledge of a team of anonymous craftspeople, instead becoming distinctively knowledgeable in the visual arts, independent from the building trade, so that architecture is considered to be bound up more with intellectual than with manual labour, and design has been narrowed down to a visual expression and clarification of the concept that comes out of the architect's mind.[61] Hence,

[59] Larry Shiner (2003), *The Invention of Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 83.

[60] Young, "The Ancient and Modern System of the Arts", p. 2.

[61] Jonathan Hill (2006), *Immaterial Architecture*, London: Routledge, p. 33.

architects have learnt new means to practise architecture, drawing and writing, to affirm their status.[62]

Before buildings are built, they have to be worked out, presented and judged in immaterial mediums. Some buildings do not have chance to be built, but architects are eager to demonstrate their concepts, and high-profile architects in particular are more inclined to discuss and disseminate their creations through the immaterial means of lecturing, writing and drawing. Peter Eisenman has claimed: "The 'real architecture' only exists in drawings. The 'real building' exists outside the drawings. The difference here is that 'architecture' and 'building' are not the same."[63] Here Eisenman equates architecture with drawings, meaning that the design concept described by drawings can represent an architectural creation regardless of whether it has been built and used. This claim shows Eisenman's certainty about the absolute distinction between designing and building, and implies his focus on the cognitive creation rather than the actual affect or feeling of individuals experiencing the space. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki wrote a book, *Unbuilt*, which includes representative conceptual projects from throughout his 40-year professional career: sky-city in the 1960s, computer-city in the 1970s, ruins-city in the 1980s and mirage-city in the 1990s.[64] These projects are either too abstractly ideal, or too advanced compared with the contemporary technology, to be built. Thus, they can only exist in mediums such as this book. However, Arata Isozaki argues in the book that the unbuilt projects are the same as those buildings that have been built and demolished. This claim shows the architect's ambition of approaching a higher cultural status by demonstrating concepts through immaterial mediums, and also reflects the absolute rejection of building in the world of architecture.

However, some contemporary architects and critics start to think of returning to "building", such as Peter Zumthor and Kenneth Frampton, who are interested in tectonics. The designer

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[62] Ibid., p. 37.

[63] Iman Ansari (2013), *Eisenman's Evolution: Architecture, Syntax, and New Subjectivity* [Online], available at: http://www.archdaily.com/429925/eisenman-s-evolution-architecture-syntax-and-new-subjectivity (Accessed: 25 December 2016).

[64] Arata Isozaki (2004), *Unbuilt 未建成/反建筑史*, Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press.

of Red Brick Art Museum, Yugan Dong, is also involved in building. His way of designing is not starting from conception, the macro-scope imagination towards the form of the building, but constructional methods for functional or pleasure purposes. The design of Xiangshan campus also involves an approach to craftsmanship, the designer introduced a collective work of handcrafted construction in the process of building production.

The great change of the architect's status is also associated with the idea of artist-as-genius that started with the Renaissance and further developed in Romanticism. The tendency towards the cult of genius is still influential in modernism and contemporary architectural practice; Le Corbusier and Rem Koolhaas are representatives considered as geniuses. Marsilio Ficino's radical interpretation, in the 15th century, of those who are outside of the mainstream, who have unusual personalities and behaviour, as geniuses gives rise to the fanatical cult of genius artists in the subsequent centuries.[65] Ficino was interested in platonic theories and developed his own theory of Neo-Platonism. His theoretical system involves essential ideas of Aristotle and Plato.[66] Ficino further interpreted one of Plato's term, "divine madness". In Plato's thinking, divine madness is a supernatural power; when one is passively filled with this power, one will simultaneously fall into an enchanted state in which artistic inspiration will arrive.[67] When one is a normal conscious state, one cannot achieve that enchanted state, artistic inspiration will not arrive and one will not have creativity. Ficino reinterpreted "madness", believing that one could actively obtain it through one's own effort – one's soul could be divorced from flesh through one's contemplation, thus returning to its divine nature, and creativity would thus arrive.[68] Ficino's interpretation of madness has fundamental influence on the recognition of artists as "divine creators", one important step towards the cult

[65] Walter Benjamin (1977), *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. John Osborne, London: NLB, pp. 150–155.

[66] Noel L. Brann (2002), *The Debate over the Origin of Genius during the Italian Renaissance: The Theories of Supernatural Frenzy and Natural Melancholy in Accord and in Conflict on the Threshold of the Scientific Revolution*, Leiden: Brill, p. 83.

[67] Plato (1963), *Collection of Plato's Literary Dialogues*, transl. Guangqian Zhu, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, p. 8.

[68] Marsilio Ficino (1975), *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 1, transl. Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London: Shepheard-Walwyn, pp. 42–48.

of genius artists.

Ficino's artist-as-genius also refers to the interpretation of Aristotle's idea of "depression". Depression was considered a negative feature of personality in ancient Greek medicine. The depressed person is introverted, lonely, anxious and scared, but at the same time they are extraordinarily creative, thus they can produce outstanding achievements. Ficino regarded the term "depression" as a pronoun of genius.[69] Depressed people are away from public life; they are in favour of contemplation, curious about myth and immersed in exploration, even forgetting daily life. Ficino's idea of genius is, then, simply understood as one in which genius is definitely unusual, a notion which is spread in the subsequent centuries and is influential in shaping the architect's status.

The completion of an architectural project requires teamwork, collaboration among a group of architects, engineers, builders, clients and so on; however, a famous architectural work is always considered the work of its architect. This architect is usually the chief of an architectural studio. The idea of single authorship in architecture is important, as it confirms architecture's status as a liberal art, because art is traditionally considered the work of genius. The idea of the "star architect" is shaped by the idea of artist-as-genius. "Star architect" usually refers to an architect who has a high global reputation, but in practice there is no single architect who can complete a project alone. There are diverse agencies involved in building production. Therefore, "star architect" does not denote a real person; the term refers to a fictional persona who is the symbol of a team of people working on a design together. The term "star architect" ensures architecture's single authorship. The single authorship of the "star architect" enables the symbolic value of the star to be transferred to the whole team, whereas under the shared authorship concept the symbolic value of the team might not be so readily recognised.

The construction of the "star architect" is about shaping the identity of genius through building production. "Star architects" (studios) are in favour of producing radical concepts and unusual forms of architecture, such as OMA in Netherland, MAD Architects in China and Zaha Hadid Architects in Britain. The way in which they produce architecture is allied with the purpose of

[69] Marsilio Ficino (1980), *The Book of Life*, transl. Charles Boer, Irving, TX: Spring Publications, pp. 7–8.

creating the image of genius. An architect can be considered as a genius if he/she produces grand and unusual systems of concepts, creating something distinctively, radically, even madly. If his/her work is rare and valuable, then he/she will be adored and seen as a genius.

The historical context that categorised architecture as a fine art, associating architecture with drawings and ideas, the cult of artistic genius and the separation of architects from builders, changed architecture's identity. It reduced architecture's duty, narrowing the range of its jurisdiction and giving design more freedom, and thus architecture has turned to focus more on written concepts, on stylish drawings and innovative expressions, than on how buildings stand up and their real effects on individuals. Architects' preference for advertising themselves as conceptual artists, therefore, manifests architecture's autonomy. [70] Due to the independence of designers, the growing attention to the immaterial "conceptual meaning" and art's invasion of architecture, architecture has tended to become more impractical, more in favour of visual fashion than of living experience, and thus has tended to move away from ordinary life.

There are other reasons associated with the rise of the designer's independence, namely the decline of shared meaning and the rise of individualism. In the past, important public buildings, such as cathedrals and city halls, expressed shared meaning and conveyed it from generation to generation through conventions. As Heidegger states, architecture was once more involved with shared meaningful traditions such as myths and religions.[71] In Western culture before the Enlightenment, all citizens, including architects, understood the same representative meaning of their shared belief. Architects worked to explain these shared beliefs and to try to embody them in building forms, and thus the meaning of their work could be easily understood by the public within the same culture. However, with the decline of religions as unifying metanarratives, meaningful codes have been rerouted from the stable to the random, from

[70] Kevin L. Burr & Chad B. Jones (2010), "The Role of the Architect: Changes of the Past, Practices of the Present, and Indications of the Future", *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, vol. 6 (2), pp. 122–138, pp. 122–123.

[71] Sharr, *Heidegger for Architects*, p. 101.

the public to the private realm, and are now scattered in individuals, so that an absence of metanarrative has developed.[72] Architectural concepts seek to justify themselves without any solid and widely shared background. The void in belief drives architects to search for any possible meaning and for ways to certify it as a widely accepted value. Therefore, after the Enlightenment, eclecticism tried to find the meaning of its existence in already-known motifs, and functionalism intended to set up a common basis for a rational approach of simplicity and transparency. Since the 1960s, architecture has experienced an era of ever-growing diversity.[73] The whole architectural scene seems to have exploded, and this has resulted in a multitude of scattered individual approaches. Architects do not have to abide by a collective and uniform value: they can encounter plural ideas and employ those which seem to offer possible justification for their own personalised concepts. In the case of iconic buildings such as Centre Pompidou, the concepts are created crucially from the architect' personal wishes, through their encounter with social values, culture and the context of the site. Even for those projects, such as Red Brick Art Museum and Xiangshan Campus, which are more concerned with pragmatism in everyday life, the architectural concepts are still proposed on the basis of the architects' individual preferences. City managers also have to discover what kind of symbolic meaning should be created for city branding and then be represented in the form of architecture.[74] For example, iconic buildings in urban regeneration projects are cultural symbols created through the collaboration of city managers and architects aiming to brand target areas. The symbol that is distinctive can then be considered as valuable for city branding. Thus, the ambition of branding a city also in a way facilitates the architect's individualism.

The tendency of architects' pursuit of "find art" concept is interesting if looked at from the perspective of Bourdieu's theories of field and the distinction of taste. In Bourdieu's view, there

[72] Alan Colquhoun (1997), "The Concept of Regionalism", in Nalbantoglu, G.B. & Thai, W.C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Space (2)*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 13–23, p. 23.

[73] Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980), *Meaning in Western Architecture*, London: Studio Vista, p. 203.

[74] María A. Sainz (2012), "(Re)Building an Image for a City: Is A Landmark Enough? Bilbao and the Guggenheim Museum, 10 Years Together", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 42 (1), pp. 100–132, p. 116.

is a specific logic to the consumption of cultural goods. The tastes of cultural consumers present different ways of appropriating cultural objects.[75] The different positions in social space which are bound up with systems of dispositions (habitus) are homologically linked with the different classes or class fractions. Thus, cultural consumption could be said to be predisposed to fulfil a social stratification.[76] In the field of cultural production, there are two fractions – the sub-field of "restricted production" and the sub-field of "large-scale production". The former is about the production of disinterested artistic works, independent from practical demands, while the latter refers to commercial and functional works meeting social demands and economic purposes.[77] The degree of autonomy and the degree of disinterestedness is presumed to be related to the possession of cultural capital, and is a good measure, therefore, of the position of the cultural player; this constitutes the law of the cultural field.[78] Cultural capital is the accumulation of manners, credentials, knowledge and skills that lends us the capacity to act in a way that shows our position within a field: those who perform with higher cultural capital are seen to be at a higher position in a field. Those who have more cultural capital have more resources with which to take part in pure and disinterested symbolic games, whereas those with less cultural capital have no choice but to respond to the taste of necessity. Any aesthetic reading which requires the viewer to possess the correct "codes" to decipher the symbolic meaning of a work is "codified" by cultural elites. Hence, Bourdieu thought that cultural consumption was predisposed to create social division by matching different social classes with their homological tastes, and that the Kantian notion that transcendent "pure" aesthetics is superior was only an illusion constructed by cultural elites in order to reinforce

[75] Pierre Bourdieu (2010), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London: Routledge, p. 1.

[76] Ibid., pp. 6–7.

[77] Hélène Lipstadt (2010), "Can 'Art Professions' Be Bourdieuean Fields of Cultural Production? The Case of the Architecture Competition", *Cultural Studies*, vol. 17 (3–4), pp. 390–419, p. 400.

[78] Pierre Bourdieu (1993), *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 39.

the structure of cultural distinction between elite and non-elite groups.[79]

In the field of architecture, "restricted production" is more likely to see architecture as an art while "mass production" relates to the production of housing and industrial buildings which focus on economic, functional criteria and other practical issues. Therefore, those who are in the restricted production field have greater capacity and more autonomous conditions under which to produce more disinterested and art-like designs, while the rest are constrained much more by the intervention of clients, authorities and costs. Furthermore, any field of cultural production, including architecture, is structured in a manner which sustains the authority of those who dominate the field**,** those with higher cultural capital.[80] So those who are in top positions have more power to establish the principle of stratification, to legitimate judgement and to dominate the field according to their own interests.[81] Existing elite tastes are used by high-status people to bound themselves together and defend against outsiders. One of the mechanisms they use, according to Garry Stevens, is education, through the selection of those whom the existing privileges favour and who also favour them, and certificating students before allowing them to start professional careers.[82] It is interesting to see that there is a linkage between the pursuit of visual concepts in architecture and the broadly adopted visual skills training in schools of architecture. Only after students demonstrate that they possess visual skills will they be accepted in the professional field, where the importance of visual concepts will be further reinforced by these newly qualified joiners with their focus on the visual. Architectural competition systems also facilitate the selection of people whose approaches accord with the system's expectations and filtering out of those who are seen to be outsiders.

As a result, architects' conceptual preferences and search for meaning production are the tools

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[79] Helena Webster (2011), *Bourdieu for Architects*, Abingdon, Oxon, & New York: Routledge, pp. 43–52.

[80] Kim Dovey (2005), "The Silent Complicity of Architecture", in Hillier, J. & Rooksby, E. (eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, second edn, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp. 283–296, p. 283.

[81] Stevens, *The Favored Circle*, p. 92.

[82] Garry Stevens (1995), "Struggle in the Studio, a Bourdivin Look at Architectural Pedagogy", *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 49 (2), pp. 105–122, p. 113.

with which they increase their cultural capital in order to improve their positions in the architectural field, according to Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. How does this increase of cultural capital take place? Architects should be interested in creating individual distinctions, knowing subversive strategies, in order to set up distinct personal tastes as effective means of coping with competitions in design battles. Hence, design concepts, especially "fine art" concepts, at times seem to be the somewhat arbitrary result of architects having to seek distinct positions for their own sake, rather than responses to common sense and everyday life concerns. In some cases, concepts borrowed from some foreign field serve as strategies for subversive groups to create an aesthetic rupture, such as deconstruction's rupturing of modernism. Some conceptual strategies can make designs seemingly outstanding enough to win in competitions, such as the concept of "between the lines" of the Jewish Museum and the "deconstruction" of Parc de la Villette. These strategies can help greatly in maintaining or increasing the cultural capital of individual architects. For those architects with higher cultural capital who are struggling in the restricted production faction, where there is greater autonomy to produce pure art works and aesthetic philosophies are highly appreciated, much more emphasis is placed on symbolic meaning, visual effects and concepts rather than on pragmatic matters. These top architects' designs are more implicit, because high-culture producers tend to encipher their concepts to maintain the scarcity of artistic competence – making it elusive, distinctive, and therefore valuable. Sometimes people cannot understand the "conceptual meaning" through the body's experience and common sense, without reading the designer's description; Wang Shu's "Eight Unliveable Houses" is such an example. Therefore, creating "conceptual meaning" is to some extent a means of maintaining architecture's autonomy: where there is higher autonomy, there is higher cultural capital, and if architects have higher cultural capital, they will have more power to develop the principle of stratification, to legitimate judgement, to dominate the field according to their personal tastes.[83] Consequently, in Bourdieu's view, it is the capital-gaining intention and the internal mechanism of the field of architecture that facilitate architects' preferences for making concepts, especially "find art" concepts. However, a good architect always sets out to find

[83] Dovey, "The Silent Complicity of Architecture", p. 283.

concepts from the context rather than making purely artistic concepts. A good architect ought to approach a design not from a visual art perspective, but from the encounter with a diverse range of pragmatic issues – site circumstances, function of the building, social and cultural context, everyday life, building technologies and so on. This type of concept does not develop solely for visual purposes, but from the attempt to find a way in which these pragmatic concerns can be resolved.

1.2 What Is "Pragmatic Meaning"?

Different from the "conceptual meaning" that is generated by the architect – from his/her deliberation about cultural-social values, philosophical aesthetics, building techniques, the circumstances of the site and the complexity of the brief – "pragmatic meaning" is produced as the body actually experiences a space. "Pragmatic meaning" emerges in spaces only when the body interacts with the space, when an action or a practice takes place in an actual space, in the light of common sense and habits arising from previous experience. "Pragmatic meaning" is able to establish a physical relationship between space and everyday life, so that the space where "pragmatic meaning" grows is not an object but a "thing" in Heidegger's terms.[84] Producing "pragmatic meaning" is a process of converting an object into a "thing".

1.2.1 Emerges from actual experience

Pragmatism goes against the Western tradition of ontology. It does not question the essence, the truth, the ontological aspects of life; rather, it pays attention to what an object could bring to us – what we perceive, how we are affected and how we can use the object, thus pragmatism always reflects the empirical and practical aspects of life. Pragmatism tries to turn away from "abstraction", "verbal solutions", "a priori reasons", "fixed principles", "closed

[84] Adam Sharr (2007), *Heidegger for Architects*, Abingdon, London & New York : Routledge, pp. 101–103.

systems", "absolutes" and "origins".[85] It "tends towards concreteness", "towards actions" and "towards facts". Pragmatism does not intend to provide us with "a solution", but always provides "an indication" of a framework in which people's own work can be set.[86]

In architecture, "pragmatic meaning" is produced through the practical use of the space. This way to have meaning does not aim for any particular result, but is more "an attitude of orientation": an attitude that always attempts to look away from "principles, categories, supposed necessities", and towards "fruits, consequences and facts".[87] "Pragmatic meaning" is achieved as a result of what actually happens in a space. Individuals might generate different kinds of meaning in the same space, as they take the space for different use; thus, "pragmatic meaning" grows variedly and dynamically over time. Diverse activities might occur on the same lawn. Some people might play football there, others might find it a good place for a picnic and still others might use the space for a dancing party. The lawn means different things to different people at different times.

There are two strands of debate in 20th-century Anglo-American aesthetics: analytic philosophy and pragmatism.[88] Analytic philosophy of art is the only mainstream tradition in Anglo-American aesthetics, but it has sustained some changes because it is being challenged by pragmatic theories. Analytic aesthetics follows the art tradition that reserves art's autonomy by identifying its concepts as high fine art. The Kantian notion of disinterestedness is the key characteristic of this strand of thought, which asserts that aesthetics should express a purely intrinsic, non-instrumental value for itself, but not for problems outside its defined boundary. Thus this aesthetics limits itself in an isolated, autonomous realm and frees itself from actual experience, sensuous feeling and bodily practice in everyday life. The notion that

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[85] Andrew Ballantyne (2005), *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Culture*, London & New York: Continuum, p. 51.

[86] Ibid., p. 52.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Richard Shusterman (1992), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, p. 3.

a judgement of taste cannot be based upon any empirical idea traps artists within narrow rational boundaries and leads them to create rigid and lifeless works. However, associating art with "high" taste which transcends the common sense of everyday life gives it a distinction which enables socio-cultural elites to assert and reinforce their class superiority.[89] This idea in some way coincides with Bourdieu. Pierre Bourdieu's book *Distinction* reveals that the Kantian view is based in class domination. In Bourdieu's view, Kantian art does not aim to offer any pleasure or interest and escapes from human sense to a higher "truth" – a disinterested value. But this universal truth, to Bourdieu, is "a paradigm case of ideology": it conflates "taste" with "truth", and this conflation has been socially misperceived as natural.[90] As a result, it could be concluded here that "theories which isolate art and its appreciation by placing them in a realm of their own, disconnected from other modes of experiencing" are embedded in social institutions and thinking habits.[91]

The reason analytic aesthetics disparages experience is that it follows the aesthetic tradition of Greek thinkers who were in favour of something more theoretic and rational, while it treats bodily experience as "a realization of [the] inferior portion of nature".[92] Science and theory exhibit "necessities and universalities", but experience reflects "contingencies and partialities". Thus, the traditional aesthetics places practical activities below theoretical activity, thinking the former dependent, deficient and always an "arbitrary addition to nature", while the latter is independent, free and self-sufficient, and is the only "authentic expression of nature".[93] Therefore, the sensorial and empirical part of things has always been depreciated, considered as not able to subsist independently for itself, but dependent upon the "truth" of things. Fortunately, turning away from traditional thinking which ranks experience as secondary to analytic aesthetics, the modern tendency tries to re-evaluate the sensorial and empirical part

[89] Ibid., p. 19.

[90] Kim Dovey (2005), "The Silent Complicity of Architecture", in Hillier, J. & Rooksby, E. (eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, second edn, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp. 283–296, pp. 288–289.

[91] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 12.

[92] John Dewey (1929), *Experience and Nature*, London: G. Allen & Unwin, pp. 354–355.

[93] Ibid., p. 355.

of culture and put experience ahead of rationality. As a result, the distinction is no longer between theoretic judgement and practical judgement of beauty, but "between those modes of practice that are not intelligent, and those which are full of enjoyed meanings".[94]

John Dewey was the main contributor to this turn of aesthetics from the analytic to the pragmatic. One of Dewey's most important ideas is his insistence that "philosophy should begin and end with experience taken in the richest, deepest sense". He claims the quality of an experience is the key to philosophical understanding. The quality is inherent in the fact that we can perceive, value and act – we can perceive "the fresh, soft, translucent greens of leaves" as referring to the quality of early spring while we can notice the "the hardened, fatigued, desiccated greens" as indicating the quality of early autumn.[95] Living in the fact is what Dewey's philosophical orientation is based on. There is no pure reason that is prior to and beyond life and that we have to endeavour to approach. Knowledge and philosophical thinking come from the sensuous experience of everyday life. On the question "Who determines art's value?", a compartmentalised definition asserts that this value is to be determined by internal standards and procedures separated from practical meaning, but according to Dewey aesthetic value can never be fixed by theory or criticism but should be tested in experience.[96]

One of the most central features of Dewey's aesthetics is its "somatic naturalism". This idea aims to root aesthetics in the everyday needs and practical activities, in order to reach the continuity of aesthetic experience with normal processes of living.[97] Art is a consequence of the interaction between a living organism and its environment – a product presenting human actions, efforts and materials. Kant's error is to assume art should be defended as escaping from experience but having pure intrinsic value, and this view is accompanied by an idea that pragmatic value is something opposed to intrinsic value. However, Dewey argues that art's

[94] Ballantyne, *Architecture Theory*, pp. 62–63.

[95] Mark Johnson (2013), "Dewey's Big Idea for Aesthetics", in Bhatt, R. (ed.), *Rethinking Aesthetics: The Role of Body in Design*, London: Routledge, pp. 36–50, pp. 38–39.

[96] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 46.

[97] Ibid., pp. 6–16.

value lies in reflecting pragmatic value and in satisfying everyday life in a more practical way.

Another term explained in Dewey's writing is "organic unity".[98] As the theories which isolate art and its empirical appreciation by placing them in a realm of their own are disconnected from other modes of experiencing, he was keen to connect sensorial parts of culture to ideological theories to create an organic unity. This unity is dynamic, the parts evolving and unfolding into the whole they form. There is no dogma to guide these parts in a particular direction, no isolated authentic significance; there is only a seeking to relate things, which will in turn generate plurality in interpretations and experience.[99] Therefore, pragmatic aesthetics is neither a static abstraction nor a universal truth from which everything else follows, but rather it attempts to be a dynamic accumulation of the interaction between existing circumstances and living intentions in everyday life. Take the lawn example again: the lawn offers certain circumstances, its own features along with weather, its location and surroundings. When people come across it, it makes them imagine what they could do with this space according to their personal needs – their intentions in everyday life. When the conditions of the lawn match with people's personal intentions, the interaction between the two will happen, and "pragmatic meaning" will be dynamically generated.

Jacques Derrida's deconstruction shows a most radical attempt to overthrow analytic aesthetics by challenging the idea that structure is centred, having a definite beginning, middle and end, and having parts integrated firmly.[100] The concept of Derrida's deconstruction is to show that things, including texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs and practices, do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, but always encompass more than any one meaning would impose and always attempt to go beyond their boundaries. A "meaning" is a way to contain and compact things into a unity, but deconstruction intends to

[98] Ibid., p. 33.

[99] Ballantyne, *Architecture Theory*, p. 34.

[100] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 63.

transgress these confines and interrupt the gathering together of such unity.[101] Derrida's decentred understanding brings unrestrained freedom, which rests on the term "différance". Différance is about a system of differences, the distinction between things, by which each item separates from others. It also refers to a process of deferral or postponing – that is, the meaning of an item can only be grasped after being interpreted by the knower, but the signifier itself has no function. It also means differing, disagreeing and dissembling.[102] Nothing can be self-sufficient, existing or being signified by itself, in the light of deconstruction. Deconstruction shows a radical resistance to the concept of everlasting fundamental meaning in which analytic aesthetics is rooted.

However, differing from deconstruction's radical challenge to analytic aesthetics, Richard Shusterman's pragmatic aesthetics sees pragmatism as a mediator between analytic aesthetics and deconstruction. In Shusterman's view, things can be multiple-interpretive to some degree, but the interpretations will have something in common. Shusterman's pragmatism agrees with the idea of "common sense", which deconstruction opposes, but it is closer to deconstruction in the sense that individual parts and things have their separated features and have interpretable potentials. In other words, Shusterman's pragmatism sees not an autonomous realm existing beyond the real world, or one solely integrated whole with parts firmly connected, but rather a world based on common sense in which things are partly joined and partly separated, and things can be identified by practices and purposes. Shusterman's pragmatism does respect differences, but it does not advocate the radical anti-essentialism which insists on absolute self-interpretation and particularity.[103] When there is activity occurring on the lawn, and thus "pragmatic meaning" is produced, how the space is used should depend first on the users' imagination. This imagination comes from users' common-sense understanding about the interaction between space and activity, and this common

[101] Jacques Derrida & John D. Caputo (1997*), Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 31–32.

[102] Michael Benedikt (1991), *Deconstructing the Kimbell: An Essay on Meaning and Architecture*, New York: Lumen, p. 10.

[103] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, pp. 81–82.

sense is built up through their previous experience of spatial practice. Since people will have similar experience when they are living in the same social environment, they will have something in common, such as habits of thinking and practising. Hence, it seems the meaning of the lawn could be multiple-interpreted by users in different ways, but all users can share the same common sense which informs these interpretations of use, such as sunny days being suitable for sunbathing or a lawn of particular dimensions being suitable for a football game.

Shusterman points out that deconstruction does one thing wrong in that it believes in non-foundational interpretations only, and overlooks that there is another thing, understanding, which is un-interpreted but could also affect our way of interacting with the world. Shusterman recognises understanding and considers the distinctions between understanding and interpretation. Understanding implies the truth of actual experience, but interpretation is merely partial explanation. Understanding comes from unthinking and unconscious processes, while interpretation needs conscious and deliberate thoughts. Linguistic formulation is necessary for interpretation, as this is used to translate one meaning into another, but understanding does not require linguistic articulation. A proper action or gesture is enough to imply the meaning behind something. There might be something that we experience and feel, however, that is not necessary, or is unable, to be described by conscious language, but that will still be part of a background of understanding when we set out to interpret objects.[104]

Pragmatic aesthetics sees architecture as a living art to serve everyday needs, rather than a self-sufficient matter of pure art transcending living realms. Architecture is therefore the consequence of attempts to understand living conditions using human beings' common sense as well as of struggles to cope with everyday life problems. Architecture creates places in which everyday needs can be served, places which make events happen, places where the body bonds with the physical environment, and thus places in which pragmatic meaning emerges from actual experience.

[104] Ibid., pp. 115–135.

1.2.2 The space with "pragmatic meaning" is a symbolic sign

It has been discussed that concept acts as an iconic sign, as the relationship between concept and design (sign and object) lies in resemblance. However, the iconic sign does not have a completely triadic relationship, because the relationship between an iconic sign and its object is independent of the knower. The indexical sign also has a degenerate triadic relationship, as the relationship between indexical sign and object, such as that between smoke and fire, is prior knowledge for the knower. Only the symbolic sign has a triadic relationship, because the symbolic sign has to be produced by the knower, whereas the former two signs are something used by knower. As has been stated, the process of design is one in which a building is given form and is also the way in which the "conceptual meaning" proposed by the architect is materialised and embodied in physical spaces. Once a building has been accomplished, physical spaces will have actual effects on users, so that the building will be transferred from being an iconic sign to the architect into being an indexical or symbolic sign to users. Some spaces have already been well defined by the architect, and when users passively follow the architect's definition, the space will be an indexical sign. However, when users actively seek the meaning of a space for themselves, the space will become a symbolic sign – one where the completed "pragmatic meaning" is produced by users and attached to the space.

For a space to be a symbolic sign, certain conditions have to be satisfied in a certain context. For example, for a particular space to signify the idea of a football field, the conditions are for a certain amount of space, fair weather, open air, preferably covered with grass and so on. After that, there should be a ball and a group of players. How all of these factors join together to form a symbolic sign depends on people's mental association of the specific context with the expected activity, a football game, and this in turn depends on their common sense, and on previous or common habits. Therefore, the conditions influence knowers' thoughts and direct their everyday practice in a particular context. Thus, pragmatic practice could be seen as a conditional action. Hearing or seeing a potential symbolic sign will lead people to make the association with an action which matches the conditions in that context, thereby confirming the symbolic sign.

Peirce divides beliefs into practical and theoretical. The theoretical belief is simply the knowledge of god's truth, static and permanent; practical belief is the uses of life, a habit of thinking or behaving based on common sense. However, every theoretical belief has to be proved by practical belief, so theoretical belief is eventually a conceptualised practical belief.[105] Pragmatism is a method of attempting to clarify the meaning of propositions, so in architecture pragmatism is one of the methods aiming to define the meaning of a space.

As discussed before, in a sign situation, the object relates to the sign and the sign causes the effect. The effect on the knower is the interpretant. Where the iconic sign exists is usually the place where the immediate interpretant emerges. However, the immediate interpretant can be understood from the sign itself without the actual effect on the knower. The actual effect on the knower which the sign determines is known as the "dynamical interpretant" in Peirce's terms. There are three sub-divisions of dynamical interpretant. The first is the emotional interpretant, which is about the feeling produced by a sign. When we see an image of a red heart, we may feel warmth and love. The feeling of warmth and love is the effect (interpretant) the red heart has on us. A similar process takes place when a place brings people a feeling, such as a feeling of being involved in landscapes on the Xiangshan campus.[106] With the same effect as that of images, spaces also offer an emotional interpretant to viewers. The second sub-division is the energetic interpretant, which involves effort. The effort could be a physical one, but could also be an exertion of mental effort. Soldiers moving their bodies according to commands could be one example in this case. There is a direct connection between the command and its corresponding body movement. The third sub-division is a habit, or a habit-change.[107] This sign allows possibilities for future interpretations and future developments and requires the participation of knowers' understanding and practice, and the sign involved in this interpretant is known as the symbolic sign. A straight trunk could be a symbol of a pillar or a beam in a building, a lawn in sunlight could be a symbol of a place for a picnic, and a window

[105] Fitzgerald, *Peirce's Theory*, pp. 62–65.

[106] See details of Xiangshan campus design in Chapter 4.

[107] Fitzgerald, *Peirce's Theory*, pp. 78–79.

seat in a bay window could be a symbol of a comfortable place for an afternoon respite or reading.

A thing becomes a symbolic sign as people use it or understand it based on their habits, exerting a sort of "self-control" over present or future actions.[108] "A process of self-preparation" always tends to lead to action. A "fixed character" is roughly imagined and measured by self-reproach over the course of an action, so that "subsequent reflection" will take place, and this reflection will form part of the "self-preparation" for action on the next occasion.[109] As the action is repeated again and again, it will hopefully approximate towards the perfection of that "fixed character". Using a straight trunk for a pillar or beam is a convention (habit) that results from repeated building activities, with repeated self-preparation and reflection in the process of approaching the most effective method of building.

The perfection of that "fixed character", in Peirce's term, is known as the "final interpretant", the ultimate result of a process of inquiry or habit change, which would be regarded as the "true interpretation", but is recognised as an ideal. This is the third type of interpretant. It is not necessary that a wholly new habit be produced in response to a sign, but it is about the modification of a sign, a change in a person's tendencies towards particular actions, according to the existing circumstance of the sign, one's previous experience and one's will. Peirce points out that habit changes usually take place in one of three ways: they "result from experiences that are forced upon us from without; from repeated muscular activities; or, finally, from mental experiments in the inner world".[110] However, in fact there is no end to inquiry or habit change, as they are always in process, so that the "final interpretant" is merely a theoretical ideal.

The main point in which Peirce is interested here is the fact that it is possible to develop habits relevant to the outer world as a result of mental experiment. Peirce concludes that as "we

[108] Charles S. Peirce (1934), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Volume 5)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 279.

[109] Ibid., p. 280.

[110] Ibid., p. 146.

consider ways in which our conjectures could be modified, we are concerned about relatively future tenses, with open possibilities. The species of future tense of the interpretant is that of a conditional mood, the 'would be'."[111] It seems that we are always in some way reforming our habits according to the dynamic circumstances in which we are situated, and we need to be open minded in order to embrace future possibilities that may fit our lives better. The exercise of the habit is conditioned by the presence of the proper stimulus. If certain conditions are given and if a certain result is desired, the habit will function and the habit change might take place. The lawn and its surrounding factors are given conditions; when people come across a lawn, if it induces in them, with the help of their common sense, a desire to act in a particular way, their habits will function on the lawn and will in turn be changed according to the current circumstances. The fact that in cooler climates people prefer sitting in sunlight, while in hotter regions people often choose to stay in shadow, and in some places people move between the two depending on the season, is an example demonstrating habit change in response to varying circumstances.

Therefore, the effects of signs include iconic effect, emotional or energetic effect and habit. Habit is the most effective. When a sign user is engaged in an inquiry, what he employs is his habit. The habit determines what he intends and he does, so that the habit constitutes the entire meaning of the sign he engages with – that is, the "pragmatic meaning". "Pragmatic meaning" is produced and accumulated through the use of habit and habit change. Although there can also be iconic, emotional or energetic effect, these effects are not what are ultimately sought in the pursuit of "pragmatic meaning", which needs users' mental and practical engagement. If a sign represents its object by another sign, such as a certain architectural form represents a historical event, the actual problem still remains unresolved but passes to another locus. However, by pursuing the "ultimate logical interpretant", the habit, it will avoid passing a problem along without resolving it.[112]

"Pragmatic meaning" likes to attach itself to living problems which we can see, hear and

[111] Ibid., p. 147.

[112] Ibid., p. 170.

experience in everyday life. In order to resolve those problems, it needs to take given conditions into consideration, including environmental conditions, the materials of objects, usability and the like, in order to realise users' intentions. The way to solve those problems is through habit, or the ever-evolving habit change resulting from the rethinking and modification of previous experience.

Pragmatist philosophers assert the importance of thinking things afresh, instead of pretending to have arrived at the final truth.[113] This idea seems to coincide with the idea of habit change. When individuals come across a new experience that creates a problem for them, this is the time at which they set out for new ideas. They may realise the internal contradictions of old ideas or the incompatibility between old theories, or find that old values cannot satisfy the current situation any longer; thus, from then on they begin to seek a modified opinion. The ideas are never "true", but are merely something gratifying a current desire to develop one's subjective beliefs. New ideas rest on old and develop them by adding new facts; the new idea therefore seems the truest to us, as it provides the most apposite answer to our current concerns. Therefore, thinking afresh means that rather than an end, there is a constant and cumulative process of forward movement. There is never a terminal point, but there are always developing meanings attaching to the present. Thus, habit is never a terminal point: it is continuously changing as people are constantly encountering new experience and foreseeing new consequence.

Therefore, habit is not a static and permanent truth, but it acts as a most appropriate answer to the present concerns in a certain context. This answer is changeable from time to time and place to place, according to the conditions in that time and place. The transformation of vernacular architecture could be one example presenting habit change throughout history. The building forms in vernacular architecture were temporary answers to their conditions. When people improved their building technologies or changed living habits, or there were changes in climate conditions, their answers in the form of buildings would be adjusted. Building forms are signs implying those contextual changes. The interpretants of the signs lie in timely

[113] Ballantyne, *Architecture Theory*, p. 33.

reactions to changed living conditions. When people have a desire to change the physical world and they make an effort to achieve that, habit change will occur. In addition, it has to be noted that not only are habits different at different times, they are also distinct between different social contexts. Naked sunbathing on lawns or beaches is quite often seen in European countries in summer, but it is rare in Eastern countries, and absolutely impossible in Islamic countries. Habits are also determined by social consciousness.

1.2.3 The prerequisite of being a "thing"

In the past, architecture could have meaning by allowing people to understand it through socially shared ideas. Myths and religious stories often played a role in shaping collective ideas, and public buildings often reflected and reinforced these ideas. Since everybody in a given social context had already had shared ideas in mind, people could understand what a building meant in the same way. However, in the present day there is a loss of association with shared codes in everyday life, as the increasing influence of technology diminishes the possibilities for evoking real meanings in life. The disappearance of old "representations of shared meaning" and the rise of contemporary "technical representations" bring a risk to architecture in that it displaces "meaning in architecture from human experience to the visual qualities of surface and appearance".[114] Therefore, this change gives rise to a transformation in the emphasis of architecture from shared experience to the representation of visual appearance and innovative technology. In the past architecture manifested and represented the values of its builders, who understood themselves as part of the community as other people did. The builders built their houses according to living requirements and conventional values, but now architects and critics tend to see architecture from the perspective of visual aesthetics rather than empirical perspectives. Architects today prefer architecture to be artistic installations, and architecture magazines demonstrate that they are in favour of visual appreciation by presenting a great many images of pure architectural spaces, without any people or activity. In addition, architecture is keen on discussing styles of building forms; each style is associated

[114] Sharr, *Heidegger for Architects*, pp. 101–103.

with a movement in architectural aesthetics, such as eclecticism, neo-classicism, romanticism and modernism. However, to Heidegger, the priority of visual aesthetics in architecture should be questioned, and experience should be emphasised. To do this involves not only the visual sense; all bodily senses need to be engaged, as well as habits generated through repeated interaction between body and space.

Heidegger sees a building more as a "thing" than as an object. Something becomes a "thing" because it engages in everyday life and establishes a physical and intellectual relationship with human sense. Visual aesthetic concepts are far from daily practice, so that they can only remain as objects, but if something actually interacts with daily life, it will become a "thing".[115] Heidegger thinks that something we feel near to us is a "thing". Nearness can be encountered when we are experiencing a "thing" in everyday life rather than an object. Nowadays all distances in time and space are shrinking because of new technologies. But the decrease of distances in time and space brings no nearness, as the nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. Nearness can only be reached by actively approaching an object through bodily practice other than simply presenting the object in front of the eyes.[116]

When an object is trying to build up a relationship with everyday life, it needs the involvement of the existing conditions of the object, common sense, people's intentions and habits. When an object interacts with daily life, then people feel nearness; this is also the point at which "pragmatic meaning" attaches to the object, and thus the object becomes a "thing". In other words, whether or not an object can become a "thing" is determined by whether or not "pragmatic meaning" is able to be attached to the object. "Pragmatic meaning" is a prerequisite for making an object a "thing". In Heidegger's terms, "dwelling" refers to the place where "pragmatic meaning" grows. Not all buildings are dwellings. We always view a building as an art work or as a technical construction. But when we speak of a "dwelling" we usually think of an activity, or several activities, happening within the space.[117] To say "we dwell there"

[115] Ibid., p. 29.

[116] Ibid., p. 25.

[117] Martin Heidegger (2001), "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York:

means to inhabit the space, to practise there, to attach ourselves to a place and engage in everyday experience there; thus "pragmatic meaning" is generated in a space as we dwell in it.

To clarify what a "thing" is and how an object establishes its relation to daily life and then becomes a "thing", Heidegger takes a jug as an example.[118] The jug is a "thing". As a vessel, it is something self-sustained and self-supporting. This function of independence separates the jug from an object, because this feature makes it useful to people in their everyday lives. However, this self-sustained and self-supporting jug remains an object only, unless it is used. Only when the jug is actually involved in people's lives will it be seen as a "thing". The capacity of the jug to be a "thing" consists not in its being a represented object, but in the process of producing the jug when people are thinking of the jug's feature of self-support before they make it. People think about the purpose of the jug. The aim is to make a vessel for daily use. The "thing" cannot exist until people's thinking has first reached the thing as a "thing". From start to finish, the potter takes hold of the impalpable void and brings it forth as a container in the shape of a containing vessel, and finally the jug becomes a "thing" to use. So the relation between the produced "thing" and daily life resides not in the jug's outward appearance, but in people's intention to make something to meet their empirical needs, based on the consideration of given conditions and the conduct of their common sense and habits, which is the essence of "thingness".

To Heidegger's understanding, a building ought to act as a "thing", associated with everyday life, representing the sense of "thingness". A building will become a "thing" only when it is designed from a pragmatic standpoint. Before drawing up a scheme for a building, design concepts need first to echo living demands, just as the void inside the jug, its impermeable sides and bottom and its open top accord with the demand for a vessel for living use. Therefore, following empirical ideas, after the building has been constructed, when people come to use

Perennial Classics, pp. 143–159, p. 45.

[118] Martin Heidegger (2001), "The Thing", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York: Perennial Classics, pp. 161–180, pp. 165–172.

it and when the spaces interact with activities, the building will become a “thing” which contains a solid relationship between physical spaces and daily life.

In brief, the first chapter provided a detailed illustration of the two ways of meaning, labelled “conceptual meaning” and “pragmatic meaning”. It can be seen that there is a significant distinction between these two ways of meaning – “conceptual meaning” is “generative”, a product of the architect’s mental processes as he/she encounters the context of a project, while “pragmatic meaning” is “emergent”, developing from the activities that actually happen in spaces. The former is an iconic sign, the latter a symbolic sign. When “pragmatic meaning” becomes attached to an object, it will be converted into a “thing”. However, this does not mean these two kinds of meaning are completely separate. In fact, they are associated in various ways in actual projects. The subsequent chapters will try to explain how these two kinds of meaning are associated by looking at particular projects.

Chapter 2. Cultural Liberation: The Permeation of "Conceptual meaning" and "Pragmatic Meaning"

This chapter attempts to discuss the association of the two ways of meaning in order to clarify the attitude that architecture can both have a strong concept and practically works – neither of them is dominant. It sees these two ways of meaning as independent but mutually impacted and reflected by each other. When an architect is producing "conceptual meaning" in a building, pragmatic matters are usually taken into consideration in search of a design concept; when buildings come into use, the architect's concept might be realised if the events happening in the space are in line with the architect's intentions, so that the "pragmatic meaning" emerging in actual spaces reflects the concept generated from the architect's mind. One reason of choosing Centre Pompidou as an example is to interpret that how the two kinds of meaning mutually permeated in a relatively independent relationship – the pragmatic matter is also significant for the making of the concept and the actual use of the building. Centre Pompidou was designed in the context of cultural liberation where popular culture is highlighted and high culture is no longer superior, so that the design concept is made in the light of cultural liberation, it concerns public interests, and the thinking of concept is towards individuals and diversity, thus rendering the two ways of meaning to be associated. Another reason of choosing Centre Pompidou is intending to explain the pragmatic role of iconic buildings in enhancing public life and liberating culture. Iconic buildings are always used to represent certain political or cultural hegemony with their distinctive building images. Centre Pompidou is not an iconic building only that presents its visual image, but it has pragmatic role – the architect turns attention to social engagement issues and how the building would function to accommodate those issues. The highly social involvement will then reinforce the idea of cultural liberation. The purpose here is to claim the importance of social engagement of iconic buildings in realising the concept of cultural liberation.

Before focusing on the design concept and programmes happening in the building, I will discuss more broadly the cultural and social context in which the design of Centre Pompidou was born.

2.1 Cultural Liberation

Cultural liberation means to resist the distinction of high culture, to remove the cult of high art, to offer the public a chance to access all forms of arts, and reidentify the value of arts. The idea of cultural liberation links to the rise of mass culture or popular culture, which started from the mid-20th century. Before that, artists and designers aimed to enhancing existing institutions of culture and distinguished between elite and public culture. The rise of mass culture gave rise to cultural secularisation and commercialisation, and the public became cultural consumers within the movement. Therefore, the public becomes the main subject in the realm of popular culture, moving from the edge to the centre of cultural authority. The design concept of Centre Pompidou is generated exactly within this cultural movement: the ideas such as public accessibility of art and information exchange are highlighted in the concept. Richard Shusterman took great pains to assert that popular art has aesthetic value in his book *Pragmatist Aesthetics*. Popular art is neither harmful to social life, nor degraded and hopeless, but rather has positives and potentials to maintain a robust social life.

2.1.1 The rise of mass culture

As early as the 1840s, French political theorist de Tocqueville had commented on mass culture and its effects on social culture. In the book *Democracy in America* he points out that high culture is under threat from the monotony of daily life. Commercial culture moves to the centre of the cultural realm. Culture is then perpetuated on the basis of how to satisfy public taste, thus losing its aesthetic value.[119] De Tocqueville, thinking from an elitist understanding, sees mass culture as being opposite to high culture and threatening to the existing institution of culture.

It was in the 1930s that mass culture was specifically defined and systematically discussed, by the so-called Frankfurt School.[120] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, members of the

[119] Alexis de Tocqueville (1988), *Democracy in America*, transl. Dong Guoliang, Beijing: The Commercial Press, pp. 580–82.

[120] Yang Lu (2000), *Popular Culture and Media*, Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company, p. 51.

Frankfurt School, coined the term "culture industry" and first presented it in the book *Dialectic Enlightenment*. "Industrial culture" refers to the production system of popular culture that is akin to a factory producing standardised cultural goods, such as films, videos, magazines, etc.[121] The Frankfurt school always negatively criticised mass culture; especially after the mid-20th century with the spread of the entertainment industry and the rise of mass media, the School clearly realised the negative social impact of mass culture. So the Frankfurt School essentially looks at mass culture from an elite viewpoint, regarding it as a non-culture or anti-culture, lacking aesthetic value and creative power. The public become passive consumers, receiving information without active consciousness, motivation or critical thought. Dwight Macdonald's ideas about mass culture follow those of the Frankfurt School, asserting that the aim of mass culture is to amuse the public, and that seeking this amusement is the fundamental end for public consumers.[122] But when the value of culture is merely amusement, culture loses its essential meaning, its distinction and innovation, becoming a standardised and superficial programme, and the public lose their independent and plural minds – what is produced is a homogeneous culture.

Since the 1950s, however, the opposite opinions towards mass culture have been become more prominent. Some theorists have realised the importance of mass culture in people's daily lives and cultural tastes, and they have noted the artistic value and techniques of mass culture, thus offering a more comprehensive and objective understanding of it. High culture is no longer considered inherently superior to popular culture; everyday life has been taken into cultural studies. Richard Hoggart, a British theorist of cultural studies, analysed British working-class life in the book *The Uses of Literacy*, where he insists that working-class people are not passive consumers of mass culture; on the contrary, they have personal interests and tastes, and have the right and the ability to make choices and undertake critical thinking.[123] There is no singular standard, and the public have not, as the Frankfurt School insists they have,

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[121] Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno (2002), *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* , ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, transl. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. p. 107.

[122] Dwight Macdonald (1962), *Against the American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture*, London: Gollancz, p. 12.

[123] Richard Hoggart (1957), *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life*, London: Penguin Classics.

lost independent consciousness, critical opinions or the ability to make choices. Hoggart's view focuses on living culture, regarding culture as a way of life, existing in social practice. This echoes Shusterman's pragmatics, which sees aesthetics as living beauty. Raymond Williams' idea is parallel to Hoggart's, in his claim that popular culture is a new cultural form that is possessed and favoured by, and amuses, the public. Williams doesn't see popular culture as something harmful to social wellbeing, but rather holds the view that culture is about life – it comes from life and serves life.[124]

Mass culture is considered as being constructed by the lower social classes. This idea can be related to Pierre Bourdieu's homology that indicates that cultural taste corresponds to social class. John Fiske thinks that mass culture is created by the subordinated part of the social class which aims to resist authoritative power and express distinctive identity and value.[125] It seems that mass culture resides in "representational spaces" – a living realm where people can create things they favour dynamically according to direct images and available sources, and the things that can actually be perceived or described in the space.[126] He also claims that mass culture originates from people who expect to create something that they need. It is part of social culture, arising from the most essential and fundamental needs of life, not something imposed on it from outside. Therefore, Fiske's idea somewhat echoes Dewey's insistence that aesthetics is rooted in everyday needs and practical activities, and thus there is a continuity between aesthetic experience and normal processes of living.[127]

As mass culture is considered as being constructed by the subordinated part of the social class, mass culture is always less favoured by cultural theorists or aestheticians who would like to present their elite social identity. The theorists who are interested in mass culture look at culture from a more critical perspective. Richard Shusterman is an aesthetician who favours studying mass culture. In the book *Pragmatic Aesthetics*, he employs much effort to justify the

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[124] Lu, *Popular Culture and Media*, p. 13.

[125] John Fiske (2001), *Understanding Popular Culture*, transl. Xiaoyu Wang & Weijie Song, Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press, p. 28.

[126] Henri Lefebvre (1991), *The Production of Space*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, p. 39.

[127] Richard Shusterman (1992), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, p. 6.

value of mass culture. Shusterman takes rock music as an example to show how people actively interact with the music using their bodies' vigorous movement and thus always gain plenty of pleasure. Compared with this, when people listen to classical music, they usually have to be serious and quiet, body movement is not allowed, so that at times they become bored. The rock music listeners firstly associate their bodies with the music instead of judging the music straightforwardly through mental perceptions. Aesthetics can be about sensual pleasure: people may get little pleasure from contemplation, but much from bodily experience.[128] In this sense, for popular art like rock music, aesthetics takes on a broader dimension – namely, the sense of beauty can be gained from bodily pleasure and the mind can be constructed through bodily experience. The Kantian notion that art does not aim to offer any pleasure or interest and escapes from human senses to offer a disinterested value cannot be justified, but is only an illusion constructed by cultural elites in order to reinforce the structure of cultural distinction between elite and non-elite groups.[129]

Centre Pompidou was designed during a time when mass culture was spreading and becoming acceptable in aesthetic discourse. Art and culture no longer belonged to the higher classes only, and mass culture was no longer considered inferior to high culture. In 1969 President Georges Pompidou took a decision that he would revolutionise ways of thinking about culture: culture needed to be democratised and be open to all. Information exchange would be important in the building. Mass information needed to be transferred and reproduced among different disciplines within the Centre, so that, instead of defining separations between disciplines, Pompidou decided to blend artistic museum, library and contemporary creation together in one location in the heart of Paris, accessible to all members of the public and to artists.

The rise of mass culture means that culture is liberated to the public. In the movement of cultural liberation, the design concept is found from public consciousness and interests, the thinking behind the concept is inclined towards the public, towards individuals and diversity. The public becomes the main subject of the design instead of any hegemony of knowledge.

[128] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 245.

[129] Helena Webster (2011), *Bourdieu for Architects*, Abingdon, Oxon, & New York: Routledge, pp. 43–52.

The purpose of the design is to create a realm waiting for the public to be engaged and to prove the value of the concept. When people are experiencing the building, they, as the subject of meaning production, will realise the concept and reinforce the idea of cultural liberation – art and culture can be dynamically created, transmitted and experienced in the building. Therefore, designed in the light of cultural liberation, the "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" are permeated with each other. The case study of Centre Pompidou tries to clarify how the two ways of meaning interact within the context of urban liberation.

2.1.2 Social engagement in reinforcing cultural liberation

Besides the main purpose of choosing Centre Pompidou – to try to identify the interaction of the two ways of meaning in the light of cultural liberation – another reason is my intention to explain the pragmatic role of iconic buildings in enhancing public life and liberating culture. This idea comes from my first visit to Centre Pompidou five years ago. Before that, I had heard that the building was iconic and had a strong concept. But when I was there, I found what impressed me was not the image of the building, but the sense of liveliness of the spaces around the building. Then I started thinking that it may be the symbolic identity of the building that attracts people to come, but that spatial vitality and social involvement is increased with the help of the programmes provided by the building, so that there is a pragmatic role to the iconic building in addition to its symbolic role. This pragmatic role has an effect on social engagement, and therefore it could contribute to enhancing the idea of cultural liberation.

There are usually two dimensions to iconic buildings – symbolic and functional. In urban iconic buildings the symbolic image has been seen to be more important, because they have such a prominent presence in the urban landscape. Appearance is a determining factor in how the public to respond to their surroundings. Thus, architects sometimes focus more on how buildings look than on how they are actually used. It is not only architects who are striving to search for symbolic meanings and translate these meanings into the symbolic forms of the building; city managers also have to decide what kinds of meaning could be linked to the city

as a brand in the form of iconic buildings.[130]

Therefore, iconic buildings are in a way considered as art works, because as Goodman points out, a building is a work of art when it signifies, refers and symbolises something else.[131] Iconic buildings always try to link the images of other objects directly – Jorn Utzon's Opera House in Sydney is a literal depiction of sailboats, or imply something through devious paths, along several chains of referential links – which can often be found in buildings that attempt to present political meaning, such as Reichstag renovation project. Hence, for iconic buildings, what the building signifies and the building appearance are always put in the first instance. Hence, iconic buildings are more likely to be positioned in relation to visual consumers instead of actual users.[132] Surface appearance and visual effects are more important in this case, so that buildings are often designed from the outside in, from the vantage point of the external gaze.

There is a tendency for urban regeneration projects to have iconic buildings with socially or culturally meaningful components as their central focus, because to promote a city as a cultural hub seems to be an effective way of promoting economic growth, and, where the iconic image tends to dominate, cultural consumption usually plays a particular role as the most visible aspect of a symbolic economy.[133] Therefore, producing iconic buildings for urban regeneration projects becomes a model in re-imaging cities and in creating new tourist destinations. The opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao marked a flagship of re-imaging the city with a focusing on an iconic building for economic and cultural purposes and achieved remarkable success, since named the "Bilbao effect".[134] After that, numerous iconic

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[130] María A. Sainz (2012), "(Re)Building an Image for a City: Is A Landmark Enough? Bilbao and the Guggenheim Museum 10 Years Together", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 42 (1), pp. 100–132, p. 115.

[131] Nelson Goodman (1985), "How Buildings Mean", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 11 (4), pp. 642–653, p.643.

[132] Paul Jones (2011), *The Sociology of Architecture*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p. 120.

[133] Steven Miles & Malcolm Miles (2004), *Consuming Cities*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 45.

[134] Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture*, pp. 116–117.

buildings mushroomed all over the world. In the UK, Imperial War Museum North in Manchester designed by Daniel Libeskind, Sage Gateshead music centre in Newcastle designed by Norman Foster and Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff designed by Jonathan Adams are typical examples. All of these projects were accomplished at the beginning of the 21st century, each associated with larger-scale regeneration plans for declining industrial sites. The symbolic features of these buildings bring visual distinctiveness to the declining sites, and their cultural features accessible to the public generate new events and social life that enable obsolete sites to be revived. The involvement of iconic buildings in urban regeneration projects reflects the fact that political and economic institutions are seeking to present a culturally and socially meaningful narrative of the transformation of local economics, and the increasing production of iconic buildings which are expected to be visibly dominant implies a transnational approach that contributes to city images through their visual effect.[135]

As cultural institutions are signs of urban affluence, cultural places are connected with capitals. So cultural facilities, such as museums, art galleries or concert halls, can promote the iconic status of a place in a conceptual way, as the cultural capital which was planted into a building is helpful to the building's reputation and thus the building will become a "mental icon" in people's minds instead of a visual icon. This is why culture-led iconic buildings are the main components in regeneration projects. For some buildings, such as Centre Pompidou, the symbolic image of the building and its cultural reputation are public attractions. There are buildings, such as Tate Modern and British Museum, that have a symbolic role without their building's appearance being crucial to it. They act more as "mental icons", since their visual appearance is second to their cultural reputation.

[135] Ibid., p. 118.

Figure 12. Tate Modern, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, London, 2000.

Figure 13. British Museum, the core of the building was designed by Robert Smirke, London, 1852.

Iconic buildings seem to be responsible for representing a city's image and bringing development opportunities through their symbolic purposes rather than through functional purposes. However, these two dimensions of symbolism and functionalism are not contradictory. The symbolic image of the building signifies its cultural status in the city, which brings the building a reputation and benefits the city's fortunes. In the meantime, an eye-catching symbolic form can attract public attention, thus bringing more public life to a place and generating a more vibrant and friendly urban atmosphere. If the interior space of the building is organised well, it will become an attractive place for social contact, as can outdoor spaces; hence, both the interior of an iconic building and its surroundings can play an important role in improving public life. In this sense, the form of iconic buildings also has the capacity to activate urban public life, and thus it performs a pragmatic role. People might be

attracted by the symbolic appearance of the building at first, but the building is then able to demonstrate a pragmatic end. Therefore, when architects are developing their design concepts, they can (and should) take actual use into consideration rather than being concerned with symbolic appearance only. Their concepts could be created from the intention to contribute to social inclusion, community life, public communication and the like.

According to Richard Sennett, cities have for centuries provided places where human beings could focus their social aspirations, experience the interplay of interests and test the possibilities of human life.[136] However, they are not serving that function now. Due to the impacts of secularisation and industrial capitalism, people have slowly destroyed the "public realm". The public realm becomes more intense and less sociable. For Sennett, a city is a place where strangers meet. It should be "the forum in which it becomes meaningful to join with other persons without the compulsion to know them as persons". Since the rise of secularisation, the loss of the belief in gods, and the cult of personality, social change has resulted in the loss of the public realm. However, Sennett believes it can be reinstated once more, but only if "public man" can somehow be resurrected. A well-designed spatial setting might in some way resurrect "public man", as spatial settings can induce social contact between people. Spatial settings have catalytic effects on social contact, not just targeted at one or the same activity, but allowing everyone to behave in accordance with their own intentions and movements and so be given opportunities to seek out their own spaces in relation to others there. It is social contact that turns collective spaces into social spaces. What needs to be found are spatial forms that are well organised so that they offer greater opportunities and causes for social contact.

Urban public realms can be found wherever we live, work and interact, serving as the main social contact generator. What we call public life is enacted not only in open-air urban space, but also in publicly used buildings.[137] So, as well as streets and squares, there are theatres,

[136] Richard Sennett (2003), *The Fall of Public Man*, London: Penguin, pp. xvi–xxi.

[137] Herman Hertzberger (2000), *Space and the Architect: Lessons in Architecture 2*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, p. 134.

museums, stadiums and stations that are used by large numbers of people. Usually culture-led iconic buildings are functioning as galleries, museums or music centres, which are good communal places for public gathering and encounter. These culture-led iconic buildings can offer great chances of social encounter for strangers who see, are seen and share the same activities. Those buildings which have iconic roles have greater potential to attract the public visually. But, after the buildings have attracted people, what they should do next to function well, thus generating and reinforcing a better social life, is a more essential matter. Although visual forms play an important role in making a city's identity, functional terms should always be the essence of architecture since whether or not a public space is used well is related much more to the quality of the space.

This chapter studies one iconic building Centre Pompidou, tending to look at the pragmatic role of Centre Pompidou, namely, as an iconic building, what it provides to pubic besides contributing its image to urban landscape, as to effect social engagement and thus reinforcing cultural liberation. Architects can choose a certain social-cultural tendency according to relevant contexts and transplant them into design concepts, through which buildings become socially meaningful. The design concepts the architects created is based on the context of cultural liberalism. Such concepts created by architects can be seen as iconic signs according to Peirce's semiotics terms. Architects aim to embody these concepts in physical spaces, and building forms act as the object of the iconic sign to architects. However, after people begin to use the space, "pragmatic meaning" will be produced and attached to buildings in people's actual experience. This "pragmatic meaning" might correspond with architects' "conceptual meaning" and it might also have extra dimensions practically explored by users themselves.

Architects seeking to embody social values in building forms is a key way in which particular buildings are endowed with social meanings.[138] Centre Pompidou, which are both attractive for their noticeable forms and high-profile designers, convey a strong social meaning of cultural liberation through the design of large public accessible spaces, transparent surfaces, flexible spaces and structures, and various social engagement programmes. Thus, when

[138] Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture*, p. 30.

people encounter these buildings and take part in programmes, they may realise the meaning that the buildings are attempting to express. Designed in the context of cultural liberation, the design concept is populist, the idea of diversity and individual experience are stressed, thus the building presents a pragmatic role, though it is an iconic building.

The next section looks at architects' production of "conceptual meaning", users' production of "pragmatic meaning", and the interactions of these two kinds of meaning. When concepts are followed by the idea of cultural liberation instead of symbolic images, this gives rise to associations with both kinds of meaning: the thinking of concept is towards public, towards individuals and diversity. The purpose of the design is to create a realm waiting for public to be engaged. When people are experiencing the building, people could realise the concept and reinforce the idea of cultural liberation.

2.2 Cultural Liberation in Design: Where "Conceptual Meaning" and "Pragmatic Meaning" Meet

Designed by architects Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, Centre Pompidou boasts a series of innovations that make it a pioneering and emblematic building of the 20th century – the inspiration and the prototype for a new generation of cultural centres. It marks a watershed in the complex relationship between politics and culture in France, rethinks public life in the city, and launches a new approach to cultural buildings that breaks down the monumental elitism of former cultural institutions.[139] With its use of steel and glass and the externalisation of its load-bearing structure, together with circulation and services, Centre Pompidou is known as the heir to the architectural utopias of the 1960s, reflecting ideas in the work of Archigram, Cedric Price and Superstudio.[140] The design concept of Centre Pompidou is not only focused

[139] Kenneth Powell & Richard Rogers (1999), *Richard Rogers: Complete Works Volume 1*, London: Phaidon, p. 120.

[140] Archigram was an avant-garde architectural group formed in the 1960s based at the Architectural Association, London. It was neo-futuristic, anti-heroic and pro-consumerist, drawing inspiration from technology in order to create a new reality that was solely expressed through hypothetical projects. Committed to a "high tech", lightweight, infrastructural approach that was focused towards survival

on visual symbolism; the idea of cultural liberation is engaged in the way that “conceptual meaning” is found, and has been embodied in the design of its physical spaces. In actual use of the building, this idea of cultural liberation is reflected in management proposals and the proceeding programmes taking place in the Centre, through which “conceptual meaning” and “pragmatic meaning” are associated. Therefore, the emphasis on a social tendency – cultural liberation – enables “conceptual meaning” and “pragmatic meaning” to be linked, thus the concern for a social value is seen as an interface where the two ways of meaning mutually permeated.

2.2.1 Design concept

In 1969 President Georges Pompidou took a decision that he would revolutionise the way of thinking about culture: culture needed to be democratised and be open to all, which was proposed in the light of the idea of cultural liberation.

technology, the group experimented with modular technology, mobility through the environment, space capsules and mass-consumer imagery.

Ceric Price was an English architect and influential teacher and writer on architecture. One of his famous projects was the East London Fun Palace (1961), developed in association with theatrical director Joan Littlewood. Fun Palace was based on a dream of creating a space where people in the community could come together to celebrate arts, science and culture. Although it was never built, its flexible space influenced other architects, notably Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, whose Centre Pompidou in Paris extended many of Price's ideas.

Superstudio was an architecture firm founded in 1966 in Florence, Italy. It was a major part of the Radical architecture movement of the late 1960s. It established three categories for future research: the “architecture of the monument”, the “architecture of the image” and “technomorphic architecture”. Superstudio soon became known for its conceptual architectural works, most notably the 1969 “Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization”. Their anti-architectural proposals used grid systems as a way to mediate space.

Figure 14. Aerial view of Centre Pompidou and surroundings.

In the 1960s, traditional cultural facilities became no longer well adapted to the changing times. Artists in the field of culture were demanding new places for exhibitions and creative activities, while the public increasingly lost interest in contemporary art due to lack of comprehension, as elites separated the arts from the public and set themselves up as the only players in the field of art. Therefore, Pompidou thought, it was time to invent something new. Moreover, since the 1950s Paris had gradually been supplanted by New York as the international cultural centre. Georges Pompidou wished to restore France's international influence in culture and the creative arts and believed there was potential for France to remain a country for artists of all nationalities and a chance to renew art structures.[141] So a contemporary art centre would be necessary, where artists could work together and connect with public. This was a new model of what Pompidou struggled to create for disseminating culture, which had great influence on the further design concept of the architecture.

[141] Philippe Bidaine (2011), *Centre Pompidou – Creation in the Heart of Paris*, Paris: Centre Pompidou, pp. 12–13.

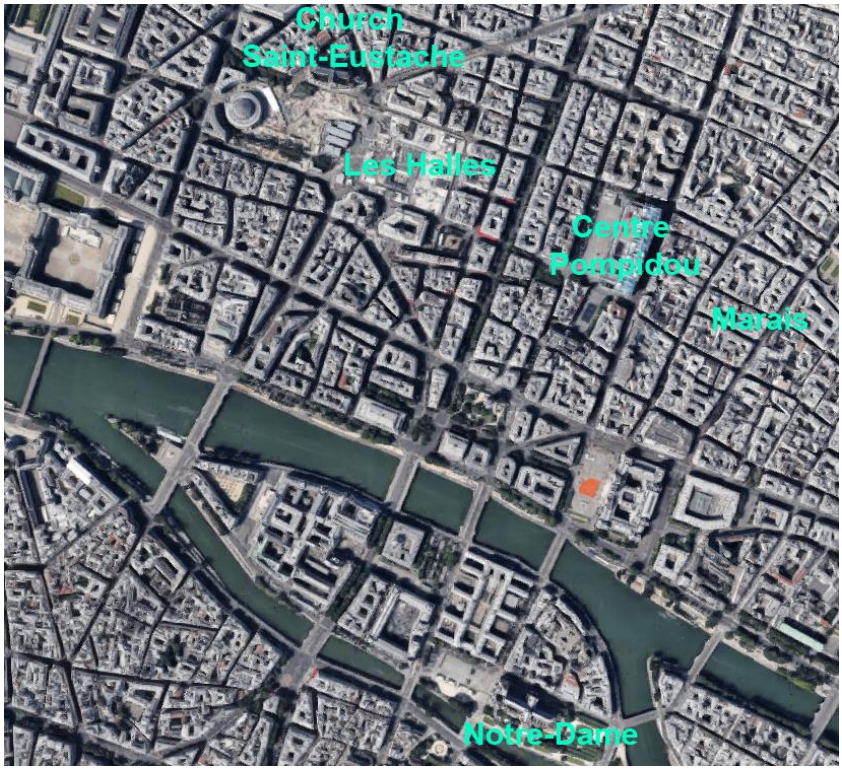

Figure 15. The urban context with which Centre Pompidou engages.

Georges Pompidou chose a site for his new centre located in central Paris, Beaubourg Plateau. This site lies north of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris and west of Marais, close to the formerly magnificent 19th-century Les Halles markets which were moved out of central Paris, leaving a void space that was eventually filled by a vast shopping centre and rail interchange.[142] The site is one of the oldest areas in Paris: the road around the site is the original route of the ancient Roman road. The houses were in poor condition and homeless people found refuge in its dark and narrow alleys. When Haussmann was planning his major urban renewal project in the second half of the 19th century, the poor living conditions led him to label Beaubourg Plateau "unsanitary block no. 1".[143] Buildings in Beaubourg Plateau were demolished in the 1930s, but nothing was proposed to be built in the following 30 years until Pompidou's decision of practicing his new culture model on the site.

Georges Pompidou's vision for the new centre was something approaching a multi-disciplinary

[142] Powell & Rogers, *Complete Works Volume 1*, p. 102.

[143] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, pp. 14–15.

mega-machine. In this opinion, the architecture would not only include a vast gallery of painting, structure and artistic installations, but there should be special facilities for music, record albums, cinema and theatre experimentation, as well as a library offering the latest books on the arts.[144] This multi-disciplinary project would go against traditional academic compartmentalisation, which insisted that there should be definite separations between disciplines. Wandering from music to creative art workshops, from library to theatre, from cinema to museum would be easily achieved within one building.

Culture had been seen as capital which could only be employed among professionals and social elites. However, the aim of Centre Pompidou was to liberate culture by resisting the distinction of high culture rather than enhancing existing institutions.[145] So Pompidou envisaged that his new centre would be a place where all people would feel free to enjoy cultural activities, and no artist or professional would have the authority to separate themselves or their work from the public, so that the public would regain an interest in the arts and social well-being would be enhanced.

In overall, Georges Pompidou sought to create an open multi-disciplinary centre for the arts. Pompidou's ambition for this new cultural centre encompassed four key roles. First, functionally, it would provide more spaces for more contemporary art exhibitions and creative activities, so as to fill the gap in relation to demand at the time. Second, Centre Pompidou would provide a great opportunity for Paris to rebuild its leading position in culture and the arts, replacing New York. Third, Centre Pompidou would establish new institutional approaches. Disciplines would not be compartmentalised rigidly, but could interact and be mingled together. It would also resist elite culture and advocate a decentralisation of culture that open it up to all. Fourth, Centre Pompidou would play an important role in regenerating Beaubourg Plateau through its diverse cultural attractions and programmes. These visions

[144] Ewan E. Branda (2012), *The Architecture of Information at Plateau Beaubourg*, PhD thesis, University of California [Online], available at: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0ww309s3 (Accessed: 2 March 2016), p. 33.

[145] Kester Rattenbury & Samantha Hardingham (2011), *Richard Rogers: The Centre Pompidou*, London: Routledge, pp. 16–17.

would then be taken into consideration in architectural concept making.

In architectural concept, Centre Pompidou was about creating a home for global artists, aiming to achieve a mission of artistic globalisation and of establishing a storehouse of knowledge for the public. Centre Pompidou would also be a laboratory for developing modern forms of exhibitions. It was intended to be a machine for exhibition, with open-plan floors possessing countless possibilities for temporary exhibition layouts according to the needs of artists and their works.

The competition, held in November 1970, was unusual that it was anonymous and there were no invitees; rather, it was open to all architects, regardless of their age, nationality, experience and degree, which also reflected the idea of liberation. Moreover, the candidates were given a "programme" which provided guidelines for the project. This programme was developed by a team which included future users of Centre Pompidou, which shows the openness and inclusiveness in the planning of the scheme. These future users were encouraged to add their requirements into the guidelines. The most important requirement the team drew up was on one the point about diversity – the originality of the project resided in the conjunction of diverse artistic and cultural activities within one single building. Consequently, the programme proposed two objectives: the flexibility of the interior spaces and the building's relation to the urban context.[146]

Both Georges Pompidou's ambition and the programme for competitors provided architects with hints for their architectural concept making. The expressed intentions, including Pompidou's idea of having an innovative, multi-disciplinary project, resisting cultural elitism and encouraging popular culture, and the programme's specification of the need for wide-ranging public involvement, flexibility and a relationship with the urban context, were expected to strongly influence the values that architects would seek to bring to the design. As the users' judgement was taken into account, which meant that how the building would function in reality tended to have an impact and to become interlinked with architects' "conceptual meaning" at the very beginning. Thus, when architects were processing their

[146] Ibid., pp. 16–17.

concepts, the values outlined above would play a role as a stage backdrop working in harmony and cooperatively with architects' personal performances.

By June 1971, 681 proposals had been submitted, 500 of which came from overseas. In July 1971 the jury designated one winning project, which had been submitted by a young and unknown team – Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and Gianfranco Granchini, assisted by Ove Arup & Partners. The jury claimed that only two teams, including the winner, opted to occupy only a partial area of the site. The relationship between the building and its urban environment was the determining factor for assessment. That is why they chose Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers as the winning team.[147] Building commenced in May 1972 and was accomplished in January 1977, with a total cost of €157 million.

The "conceptual meaning" the architects created lies in four key areas: relations with the urban context, cultural liberation, structural and programmatic flexibility, and information exchange. We can see that those values proposed by the architects overlap with the programme's objectives and Pompidou's personal ambition, but now they were being transformed into architects' concepts, the iconic sign, which would then be embodied in building forms.

[147] Ibid., pp. 17–18.

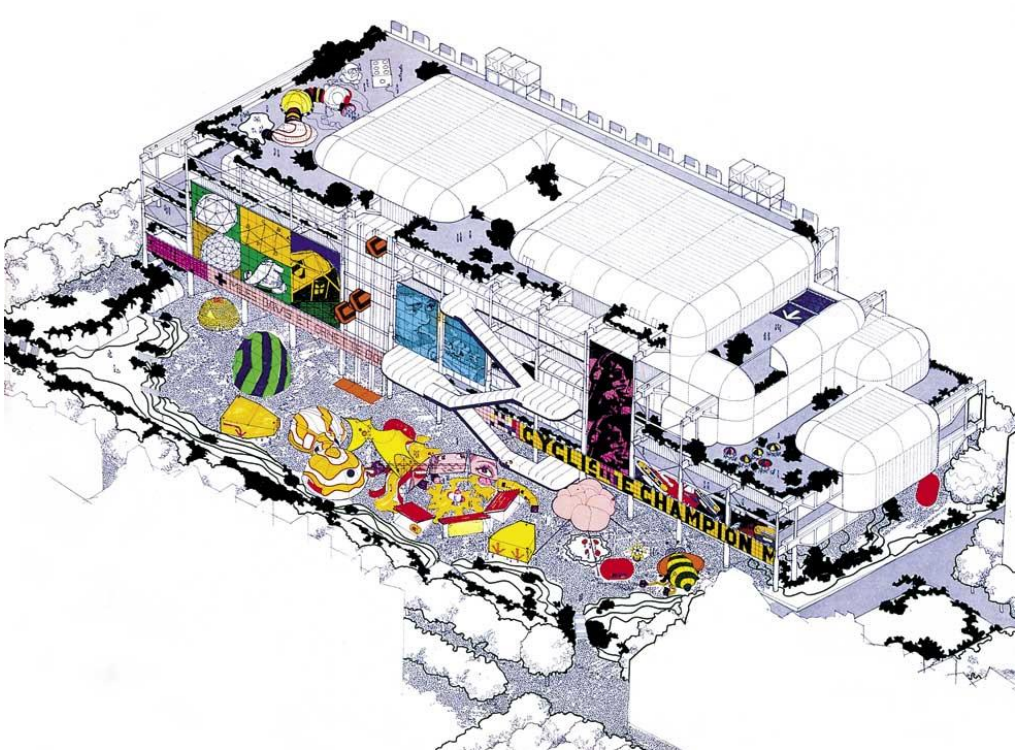

Figure 16. Draft design of Centre Pompidou: innovative, lively, flexible, fun and accessible to all.

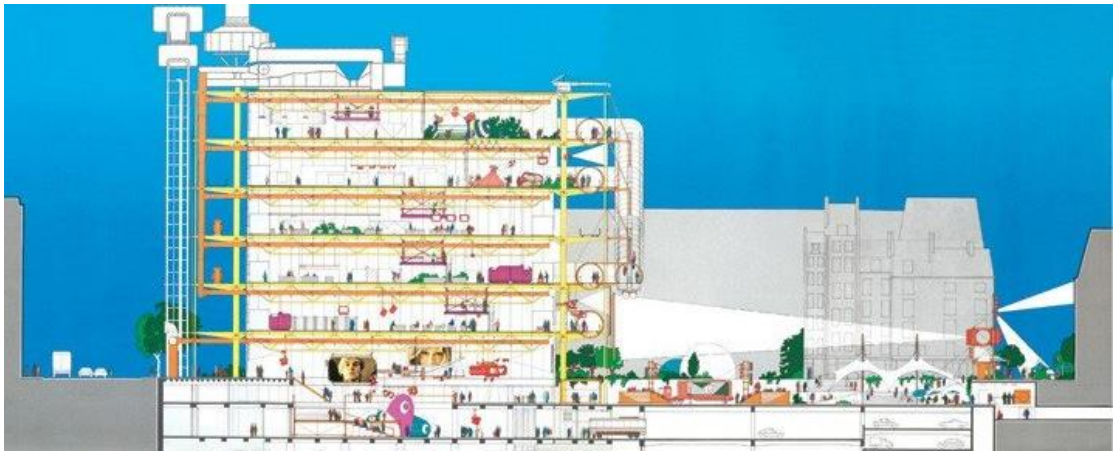

Figure 17. Draft section of Centre Pompidou: The Piazza in continuity with the open ground floor of the Centre and the idea of an exposed structural system.

For the first "conceptual meaning", the architects laid emphasis on the continuity between the centre and the city. Piano and Rogers aligned their building with a north–south axis, parallel to the Rue Saint-Martin. This orientation made Centre Pompidou integrated with the urban fabric, without standing out in such a way as to compete with the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris or the Church Saint-Eustache, which are of almost equal mass but oriented east–west.

Piano and Rogers' building only filled half of the given site. In doing so, their purpose was to leave broader space for open-air activities, creating more possibilities to tie the building in with the neighbourhood as well as providing a solution to the lack of urban space in this neighbourhood.[148] At the beginning this neighbourhood Les Halles had no open public space. This gave architects the prompt that they should provide a vast public space open to all in this neighbourhood. The overall concept of the Piazza (Plaza) was that there would be an "explosion" of life in this big open space, in contrast to the density of the rest of the area. Les Halles had many restaurants, small shops and markets, visited by millions of people who would then all "explode" into this big space.[149] In Piano's view, for a city which has heavy traffic, such as Paris, pedestrian zones are rather essential; while Centre Pompidou would work as a "catalysing magnet" in its neighbourhood, a physical open public space around the building was important to keep it apart from vehicle traffic, so as to ensure robust public activities would happen around the Centre.[150] The final decision in relation to the Piazza was to create an inner courtyard in continuity with the open ground floor of the Centre. The Piazza would gently slope down from the Rue Saint-Martin, a pedestrian street, all the way to the foot of the building. Thus the Piazza would create a link with the neighbourhood as well as providing plenty of open public space.[151] This idea of linking the building with the surrounding urban context and integrating open public space into the project was in compliance with the programme's requirement for a connection with the urban environment. The architects here were working as meaning mediators.

[148] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 20.

[149] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers,* p. 111.

[150] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 45.

[151] Ibid., p. 31.

Figure 18. Masterplan of Centre Pompidou.

Richard Rogers sees the history of architecture as one of social and technical invention rather than of styles and forms. During those periods when change quickens and turning points are reached, innovation is more important than consolidation of conventions.[152] It is at such turning points that new technological developments offer architects extraordinary opportunities to evolve new forms and materials, but a more crucial social change also arrives at these times – culture desires to be liberated and open to all. One of Georges Pompidou's anti-institutional intentions was to build a centre for the public, not a monument only for specialist and cultural elites. Following Pompidou's vision of resisting institutionalism, the architects insisted that the language of the architecture should be expressed in a rejection of the idea of a triumphant building. Thus, Centre Pompidou would work as a way to liberate culture rather than institutionalise society – offering the public a curious and functional object,

[152] Richard Rogers (2013), *Architecture: A Modern View*, London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, p. 7.

winning over their suspicions and stimulating their interest.[153] It would start a movement of cultural liberalism in which all people would be welcome to actively enjoy artistic and cultural events rather than creating a cultural monument and letting all worship it. In terms of the exhibited objects, Centre Pompidou is intended to be a place of living arts, rather than a pompous mausoleum for the art of the past.[154] This idea in some ways follows Archigram's intention to liberate the arts into the world of real life, especially elite art such as paintings and sculptures, teaming experience of urban life with artistic events.[155] So the architects were taking the concept to mean, most importantly, that the Centre would be a people's place, and therefore the design had to be fun and accessible to all.[156] Piano envisaged that the building would be a vertical village, where tourists, students, artists, specialists, passers-by and Parisians could mingle, and enjoy the view over the city, visit exhibitions or read in the library.[157] The users' well-being should be at the centre of the whole system, by offering them a good range of services. In this way, the building would become alive.

Another requirement the architects incorporated into their "conceptual meaning" was flexibility. The brief specified that there should be as much internal flexibility as possible, that the future evolution of needs should be taken into account and that all sectors should be treated in a way which allowed the possibility of adaptation.[158] Thus, the themes of flexibility and polyvalence were established early on. Piano and Rogers explained that their building would not be a conventional architectural monument, but would be fluid, flexible and easy to change.[159] Flexibility took various forms in the scheme. First, the building itself would be

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[153] Renzo Piano (1992), *Renzo Piano Building Workshop: In Search of a Balance*, Tokyo: Process Architecture Co., p. 29.

[154] Peter Buchanan (1997), *Renzo Piano Building Workshop: Complete Works (Volume Three)*, London: Phaidon Press, p. 10.

[155] Bryan Appleyard (1986), *Richard Rogers: A Biography*, London: Faber, p. 183.

[156] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers*, p. 63.

[157] Renzo Piano (2004), *On Tour with Renzo Piano*, London: Phaidon, p. 9.

[158] Branda, *The Architecture of Information*, p. 79.

[159] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 21.

physically reconfigurable. Architects would make the building neutral and modular so that it would allow for possible transformations in the future. The building would effectively be a framework which would provide room for the improvisations of users.[160] This framework basically consists of a system of exposed steel superstructure. There would be some parts of building that would have shorter lives, such as lifts, toilets and service pipes, and would be replaced periodically. Even the whole building would be changeable. As Rogers and Piano explained, one way in which they would demonstrate the building's capacity for change was to specify the ultimate change: how to take the building apart if the day came that people no longer wanted to use it. By simply breaking out a little concrete, the whole building could be disassembled and the pieces could be taken away and reassembled elsewhere.[161] The second form of flexibility would be about programmatic evolution within the fixed architectural form. This meant that in the future the Centre could potentially become a factory, a food store, a school and so on. This kind of flexibility would be supported not only by the possible reconfiguration of architectural forms but also by changes of programming and management.[162] Each of the five storeys is made up of a spatial enclosure with an open plan which can be adapted to any activity. Structural systems were designed to be relatively independent, able to be expanded or diminished according to activities.[163] The architecture would be a flexible container, wherein events would happen dynamically and interior spaces would be transformable within the freestanding structural framework.

The decision to create a transparent façade also interpreted the idea of cultural liberation.[164] Piano and Richard clearly expressed their intention of approaching the populism of culture by abolishing the closed façade and creating a transparent façade so as to remove barriers which

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[160] Branda, *The Architecture of Information*, p. 96.

[161] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers*, p. 84.

[162] Branda, *The Architecture of Information*, p. 97.

[163] Massimo Dini (1983), *Renzo Piano: Projects and Buildings 1964–1983*, New York: Electa/Rizzoli, p. 126.

[164] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 20.

block access to culture.[165] So they intended to break down the conventional idea of a façade and to create a "non-façade type of situation".[166] Transparency is essential to the democratic concept, as it allows people to see into and out of the building.[167] The entire structure is exposed and what can be read on the façade is revealing of its internal mechanisms, and this enhances the feature of transparency of the building to passers-by. Therefore, Centre Pompidou would be permeable from the streets. It was proposed to have several entrances from various points on the ground floor and first floor levels. The transparency and permeability would provide a strong sense of invitation and welcome, as to achieve the idea of publicness.

Furthermore, it seems the architects submitted a playful scheme on the edge of architectural conventions, which would in a way resist the aura of the museum elite. The strongest guideline in the architects' thinking was the requirement to design a party, an urban toy, rather than a museum monument.[168] Everything the architects did was part of an attempt to break away from the classic modernist Corbusian tradition.[169] In short, to attract more people, the architects proposed to invert conventional codes, make fun of existing institutions, demystify monumental culture and create new gestures in order to start a new relationship between people and art as well as a new way of presenting art and culture, closely corresponding with Georges Pompidou's anti-institutional vision.

The last element of the "conceptual meaning" for Centre Pompidou was to make it an information exchanger, a machine of idea sharing. Georges Pompidou's original intention was for the building to be an information-renewing system. It was expected to disseminate news about artistic creation, industrial design and up-to-date research by the institutions of its

[165] Francesco Proto (2005), "The Pompidou Centre: Or the Hidden Kernel of Dematerialisation", *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 10 (5), pp. 573–589, pp. 573–574.

[166] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers*, p. 87.

[167] Victoria Newhouse (2008), "Richard Rogers + Architects, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 67 (4), pp. 597–599, p. 598.

[168] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, pp. 21, 27.

[169] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers*, p. 75.

library and museum.[170] What Piano and Rogers conceived is not only a "cultural centre", but a "live centre for information and entertainment", a formula with a wide range of emphasis, and "a dynamic communication machine".[171] The building provides information from the Centre to the public on the Piazza, while people moving around on the Piazza are part of visual effect of the Centre. The idea of the façade was to create something like a communication intermediary, helping to exchange information between what is going on in the building and people in the Piazza.[172] The building also attempted to exchange information within and between internal disciplines – exhibitions, library, museum, theatre and creative workshops, by creating chance of contact between different activities.[173] However, the brief pointed out that the concept of information connection could not be self-sufficient: it would be meaningful only if activities and ideas were produced by people in actual use.[174]

The Centre's permeability, with outside public space, the flexibility of its interior spaces, the transparency of the façade, and the fluidity between the inside and outside of the building as well as between the Centre and the urban public space, made all kinds of exchanges possible between different disciplines, between the Centre and urban public space, and between arts and people, which would further achieve Georges Pompidou's vision of the coexistence and interaction of multiple disciplines.

Centre Pompidou was expected to discharge a number of responsibilities, from restoring France's international identity in creative art to regenerating Beaubourg Plateau, from being consistent with the urban context to being flexible and polyvalent in programmes and structural system, from presenting anti-institutional value and liberating culture to exchanging information between multiple disciplines, as well as between the arts and people. Centre

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[170] Branda, *The Architecture of Information*, p. 33.

[171] Deyan Sudjic (1994), *The Architecture of Richard Rogers*, London: Fourth Estate and Wordsearch, p. 56.

[172] Rattenbury & Hardingham, *Richard Rogers*, p. 65.

[173] Ibid., p. 91.

[174] Branda, *The Architecture of Information*, p. 68.

Pompidou's struggle results not only in the anti-conventional symbolic form of the building but, more influentially, in an innovative way of engaging practically with the arts.

2.2.2 Everyday life at Centre Pompidou

Since the building was opened to public, and cultural events have been programmed and carried out, "pragmatic meaning" emerges in the building, through which "conceptual meaning" might be reflected in actual experience. The following will firstly look at management intentions before going into "pragmatic meaning" of the building.

- Management intentions

President Alain Seban, appointed to the presidency of Centre Pompidou in 2007, has encouraged the institution to adopt a strategic approach unique among major cultural institutions.[175] This strategic approach re-confirms the mission of Centre Pompidou as a platform for exchanges between society and contemporary creation in pursuit of the vision outlined directly by President Georges Pompidou, and also overlaps with the design concept of the architects of making the building an information exchanger.

On the basis of its strategic mission, Centre Pompidou has identified a number of priorities in programming its activities. There are basically four priorities. The first is about showcasing heritage of art. Second, Centre Pompidou has committed to clarifying its services by adopting a programming strategy in respect of temporary exhibitions and has also been aiming to develop new, more proactive multi-disciplinary programmes with a closer relationship with artists. Third, as Centre Pompidou has reasserted itself as a cultural innovation platform, it is a laboratory experimenting with new formats of intermediaries, shows and performances in order to link arts and people. Fourth, Centre Pompidou aims to be a global player, in response

[175] Centre Pompidou (n.d.), *Perpetual Momentum and a Proactive Strategic Approach* [Online], available at: https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/The-Centre-Pompidou#75 (Accessed: 13 August 2015).

to the globalisation of artistic creation.

These missions and priorities in management terms correspond to a great extent with the Centre's "conceptual meaning". Being a platform for information exchange between creative arts and wider society follows the architects' concept of Centre Pompidou as an information exchanger between arts creation and the public, between the building and the outside environment, and between diverse disciplines. Furthermore, Centre Pompidou's policy of regular renewal is correlated with the architectural concept of flexibility. Constant development in programmes and updating in creative information are necessary so as to maintain the Centre's role in cultural innovation. Therefore, the management values and "conceptual meaning" of the building have the same root, so that the "conceptual meaning" which was created at the beginning and attached to the physical space of the building is more likely to be realised through ongoing programmes and activities carried out under the strategic mission.

- Achievements

Since the moment when Centre was opened to the public on 2 February 1977, it has rapidly grown to be one of the most popular cultural venues in the world and one of the most visited monuments in France. The late 1970s and the 1980s saw Centre Pompidou stage highly influential exhibitions that made major contributions to the history of 20th-century art, including the series "Paris-New York", "Paris-Berlin", "Paris-Moscow", "Vienna: Birth of a Century", "Memories of the Future" [176], which provide a sense of wide scope in cultural interaction. A reorganisation in 1992 saw the creation of a department of cultural development, responsible for a programme of live performance, film screenings, lectures, symposia and debates, thus offering the Centre more cultural attractions.

Centre Pompidou was designed on the basis of a predicted 5,000 to 6,000 visitors per day. But

[176] Centre Pompidou (n.d.), *The History* [Online], available at: https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/The-Centre-Pompidou/The-history (Accessed: 9 March 2016).

it has received over five times as many as this.[177] During its first two decades, Centre Pompidou welcomed over 150 million visitors. After Centre Pompidou underwent renovation work in 1997, it reopened on 1 January 2000, again meeting with great success, being visited by 16,000 people a day that year.[178] At present, Centre Pompidou welcomes some 3.5 to 3.8 million visitors per year.

Data such as that above provides a sense of how Centre Pompidou has sought to approach publicness and openness of culture. The details of programmes and events running at the Centre will say more about what has been achieved.

- What is going on in the building?

In line with the "conceptual meaning" of the building and management approaches, Centre Pompidou ultimately presents itself as a large-scale steel machine accommodating diverse interactive programmes.

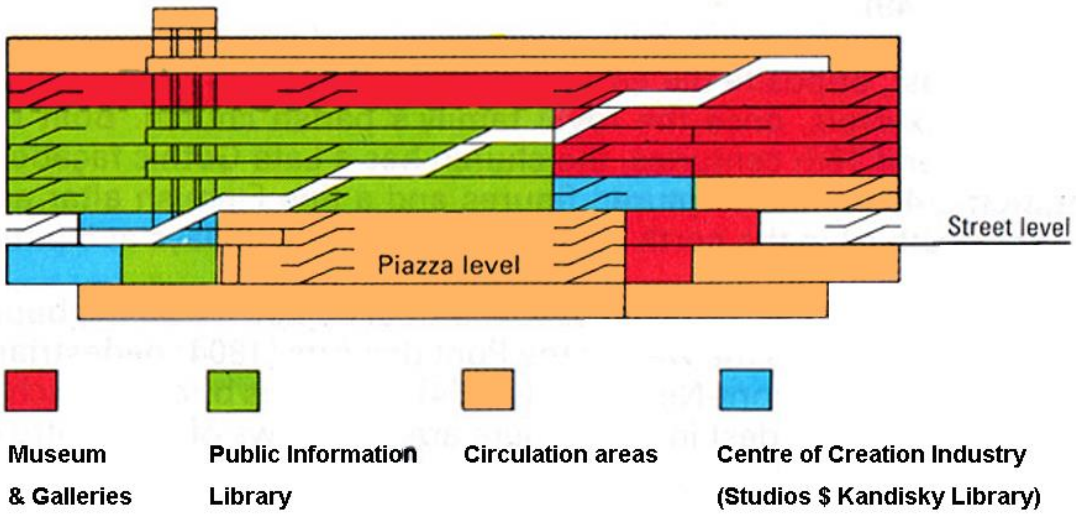

Figure 19. Section diagram of Centre Pompidou.

The large and slightly sloping Piazza, designed as an extension of the Centre, functions to lead people towards the Centre and is seen as a magnet for the social life of the wider district. The

[177] Renzo Piano (1997), *The Renzo Piano Logbook*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 238.

[178] Centre Pompidou, *The History*.

Piazza is a convivial place where different publics intersect – visitors going to the museum, readers going to the library, participants going to workshops, as well as large numbers of tourists, street artists and street traders with their stalls on the ground. People from all over the world experience the public space, enjoy the activities it offers and carry out their own activities. People lie on the ground, watching the crowds in the escalators going up and down. Some young people play guitar while some sit around singing together. Some people rest on the steps, drinking and having their lunch, facing the colourful structure and seeing the moving figures inside through the transparent façade. There are occasionally live performances on the Piazza, which results in a crowd of people gathering together instantaneously, to later disperse soon after the performances finish. Sometimes there are themed events on the Piazza held by the Centre in conjunction with the festivals taking place inside the building. All of these contribute to a relaxed and diverse atmosphere around the building that makes the Centre Pompidou an inviting public space. The activities taking place are conditional, depending on the spatial conditions and existing events. Many events themselves result in other events. People of different ages can both pursue their own interests and have chance to meet others who are different from them. It seems that Richard Sennett's view, that a city ought to serve as a place where strangers meet, has been realised here at Centre Pompidou.

Figure 20. Large public space in front of the Centre Pompidou building.

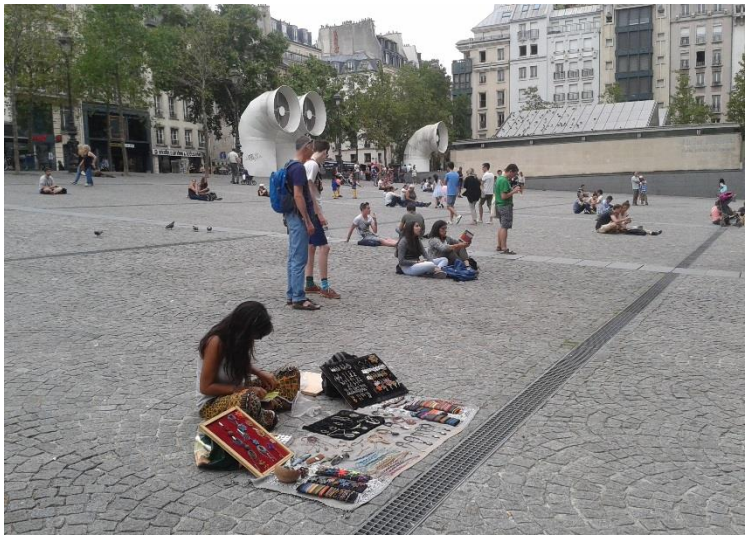

Figure 21. Stall on the ground of Piazza.

Figure 22. Street artist in Piazza.

The Forum is the largest public space in the building, located mainly on the ground floor, assisted by basement and mezzanines which extend along the entire length of the building. The Forum is the heart of the building, serving as the common space for all departments, and welcoming 25,000 visitors per day.[179] It was designed to be a fluid extension of the Piazza. No threshold, porch or step breaks the continuity between the outside Piazza and the inside Forum. However, due to climate considerations it was not possible to implement this, and thus

[179] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 48.

the sense of continuity and fluidity was impaired to some degree. The security check and the long queue it causes at the main entrance block the fluidity between Forum and Piazza even further. The Forum more resembles an enclosed and covered urban plaza with its own cafe, bookstore, shop and cinemas, and huge available spaces for temporary exhibitions and live performances. At the same time, the glass wall enables people to perceive activities happening in the Piazza and the surrounding city. So the continuity between inside and outside only exists at the visual level in reality, with little physical continuity in terms of actual behaviour. In addition, being permeable from the street is one of the ideas contained in the design concept – it was proposed to have several entrances from various points on the ground floor and first floor levels, which was supposed to provide a strong sense of welcoming. But having too many entrances created inconvenience in terms of practical management, so that in the end there are only two entrances open to the public – one main entrance leading to all departments except the Public Information Library (BPI), and one entrance especially for the BPI. Therefore, practical management considerations to some extent weaken the architects' "conceptual meaning" of liberating culture as much as possible by allowing access to creative culture through a permeable façade.

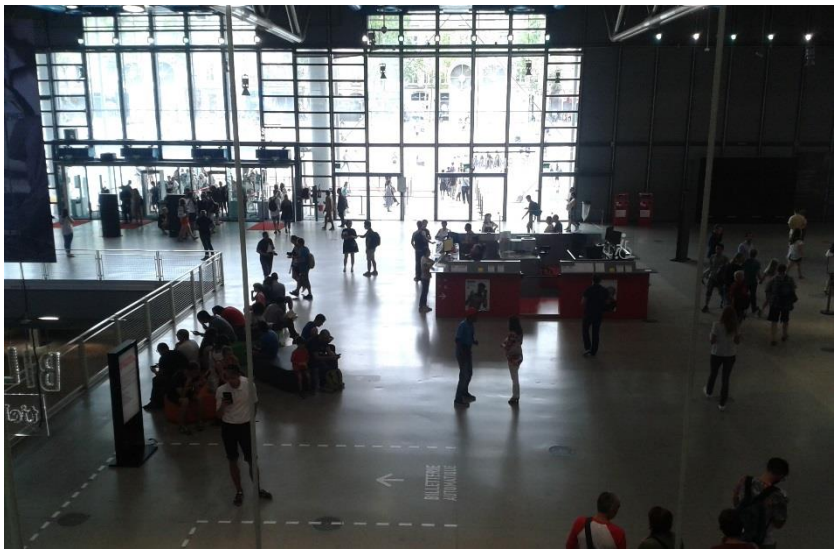

Figure 23. Glass wall between Forum and Piazza.

Following the architects' claims, the Forum, as the most polyvalent place in the building, serves as the information connector where people accessing different departments meet, and where

a diversity of activities and events take place. There is an information desk which acts as a reception, where maps, workshop introductions and exhibition information are available. A consultant team works there, waiting for enquiries from the public. Several LED boards and big screens stand scattered throughout the Forum, showing advertisements for applications designed by Centre Pompidou and ongoing exhibition information, as well as forthcoming workshops and other events. These LED boards and screens work as an accessory to the information desk, disseminating news of the arts in order to connect the public with the arts. The huge space of the Forum is available for temporary exhibitions and live performances. Many different artistic displays have been arranged in the Forum since it was opened. There is a 900-m^2 hollow in the centre of the Forum, which makes the continuity between the ground floor and basement possible and enables some art works which need more space in height to displayed and to be visible from the ground floor. For example, Figure 39, showing large metallic balloons hanging over and down into the hollow space, is an art work named "Le Grand Mobile" by Xavier Veilhan, which was displaying from October 2004 to January 2005 in the Forum in parallel with the exhibition in the Espace 315, an exhibition space adjacent to the Forum.[180] The plain space in the Forum enables it to be flexibly used and able to accommodate a wide range of art works, reflecting the Centre's openness to all arts.

Figure 24. "Le Grand Mobile", Xavier Veilhan, displayed in Centre Pompidou from October 2004 to January 2005.

[180] Ibid.

However, at ordinary times when there is no special event taking place on the ground floor of the Forum, the huge space is converted into a place with a certain sense of emptiness. A Chinese family visiting Centre Pompidou commented that it was better to look at the building from outside, as the outside Piazza was lively and welcoming, but there was nothing in the Forum.[181] Although it is always crowded as there is usually a large number of people moving through or staying on the ground floor, yet it is seemingly more like a commercial plaza than a public space. This feeling of commercial atmosphere is a result partly of the twinkling neon signs and partly of the shop and the bookstore, located at two edges of the ground floor.

Both the shop and the bookstore sell products relevant to the brand of Centre Pompidou, creative art products, art education books and the like. The bookstore offers more products, and, what is more impressive, a broad range of professional artistic books from installation art to architectural design, from photography to sculpture, from music to dance. The shop and bookstore are the two main departments of attraction on the ground floor. The cultural products provided at the two shops play multiple roles – besides direct economic benefit, they aim to reinforce the brand of Centre Pompidou and maintain its cultural status and reputation for innovative art. But more significantly, the shop and bookstore, in a way, act as information exchangers, following the architects' concept, which tend to create a linkage between modern and contemporary art and the public.

[181] Personal conversation, Piazza, Centre Pompidou, 8 August 2015.

Figure 25. Bookstore and cafe in Centre Pompidou.

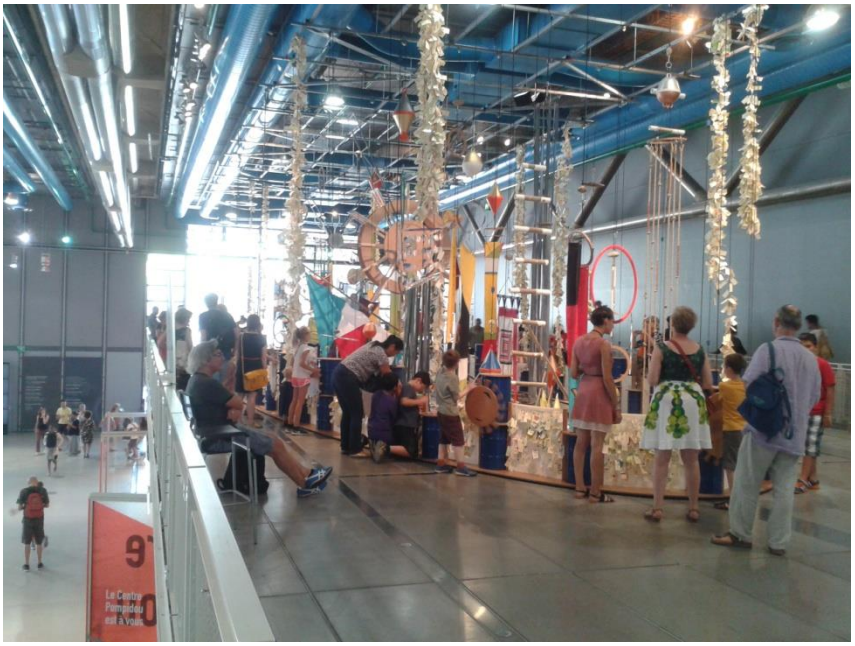

Figure 26. Children's Gallery on mezzanine floor in Centre Pompidou.

Figure 27. Shop underneath Children's Gallery in Centre Pompidou.

Above the shop is the Galerie Des Enfants (Children's Gallery), a playground for children. The Children's Gallery is an exhibition area where children and their families can enjoy artistic creation through engaging with experimental installations. It is perhaps the most visible space of the entire Centre Pompidou. This highly visible presence of the Children's Gallery to the left of the main entrance enhances the sense of creation and popular culture of the building.[182] Each year, the Children's Gallery presents two new workshop-exhibitions aimed at children, devised by contemporary artists. These workshop-exhibitions are interactive and fun, encouraging children to engage more in artistic work and share experiences of art with their peers. These exhibitions are renewed every six months, either linked to major exhibitions in the Centre or on an seasonal theme, which corresponds with the design concept of flexibility .[183] Furthermore, those exhibitions consist not of static art works hanging from picture rails, but practical workshops for children to have fun through doing and learning with artistic installations, therefore children's interest is activated and they are actively involved, and this is in accordance with the architects' conceptual assertion of liberating the public while resisting elitism.

[182] Fiona Kearney (2000), "Centre Pompidou", *Circa*, No. 94, p. 37.

[183] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 55.

Besides the Children's Gallery, Centre Pompidou also arranges programmes involving younger members of the public, from 2 to 16 years of age, in the Atelier (Workshop) and Studio 13/16 on the ground floor of the Forum. The Workshop attempts to provide a range of activities, graphic arts, design, fashion, music and dance, targeting different young children of different ages, so as to create a place where they exchange and share ideas through observing, experimenting, being familiar with the world of artists, developing their imaginations and utilising contemporary creations.[184] Specific programmes taking place in these places are linked with featured exhibitions and provide the young generation with a space of imagination and creativity and the privilege of contact with art.

Information exchange between society and contemporary creation is one of the major missions of Centre Pompidou; to support and observe contemporary creation is part of the task for the Centre. On the mezzanine level of the Forum, two places are designated for accommodating contemporary art exhibitions: Galerie Sud (the South Gallery) and Espace 315, both are running two to three exhibitions per year.[185] These two places are open to younger generations of artists; thus, visitors here can encounter the latest trends in art in the most innovative forms.

Theatres also contribute to disseminating information on creative art. There are four theatres for films, shows and lectures in the Forum, some of them linked with programmes held in other places in the Centre. Two of the theatres are cinemas, with at least 450 screenings and 50,000 spectators per year. The theatres cover a multitude of cycles of monthly programmes, multi-disciplinary festivals and retrospectives in which many actors and professionals of the cinema participate.[186] Moreover, the cinema in fact is everywhere at Centre Pompidou, in the museums and libraries, since it is considered as an art in parallel with painting or photography. Thus, the cinema at Centre Pompidou is treated as an object of exhibition in addition to being used to screening programmes at theatres.

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[184] Ibid., p. 54.

[185] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 51.

[186] Ibid., p. 52.

Figure 28. The Public Information Library in Centre Pompidou.

As the BPI serves as a huge information connector accessible and free to all, not even requiring registration, it has broken the institutional tradition of libraries by offering information to the whole public rather than small groups of specific people.[187] Unlike most other libraries, the mission of the BPI is to offer continuously updated collections, both French and international, both general information and current events, aiming to satisfying all public needs from those of neophytes to those of specialists, instead of collecting and conserving publications only. The collections in the BPI are dynamic, based on the criteria of being as up-to-date and useful as possible. It tends to offer knowledge in its latest available forms, while making it available to the public directly and easily in multiple forms including books, periodicals, sound and audio-visual recordings, and digital resources.[188] Besides concrete and digital documents, the BPI also offers a range of cultural activities, including exhibitions, encounters, public reading, social issues and digital cinema. These activities are held inside the BPI and some extend to theatres, and even outside the building. Diverse forms of mediation are employed for the purpose of involving more social groups in the Centre's activities. These mediations range from teaching workshops to a personalised service of answering remote questions.[189] As a result, the BPI, aiming to be a knowledge mediator, does follow the architects' concept of the Centre being an

[187] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 56.

[188] Ibid., p. 57.

[189] Ibid., p. 58.

information exchanger and liberating society by being open to all of the public, to all ideas and all forms of expressions, and by engaging with as wide a range of social needs as possible through multiple programmes arranged at the library.

The zigzag escalator hanging outside the building, which functions to transport the public to the upper levels, has become a key part of the image of the façade and has acted as a symbol representing Centre Pompidou. With the escalator going up, the eye moves away from the Piazza to the whole urban landscape. Visual contact between the building and the Piazza is generated on the lower levels, but as one moves higher, the image of the roof landscape of Paris takes shape. Most of the buildings in Paris were built during the 19th century following Baron Haussmann's planning which regulated the height limit of 20 metres, or six to seven storeys. This limit is still in force today, with a maximum height of 25 metres in the district where Centre Pompidou is located.[190] Only a few important buildings, such as Centre Pompidou, have been allowed to exceed this height limit. As a result, on the upper levels of Centre Pompidou, a great visual relationship can be generated between the Centre and the urban landscape, which enhances the architectural concept of having a strong relationship with the urban context. Standing on the top level, one is able to see several iconic buildings across Paris, such as the Eiffel Tower, Sacre-Coeur, the Grand Arch of La Defénse and the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

[190] Ibid., p. 84.

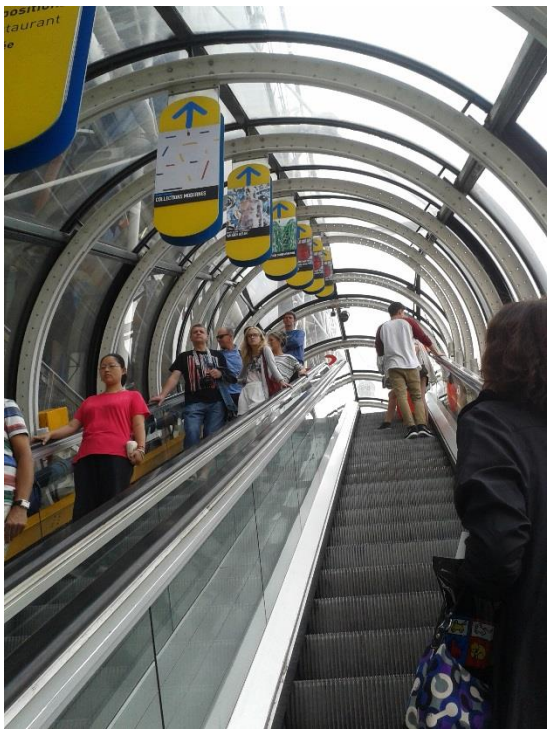

Figure 29. Inside the escalator tube of Centre Pompidou.

Figure 30. Viewing corridor on the top floor of Centre Pompidou.

The escalator was originally designed to be accessible from the north entrance outside the building, but for safety and management reasons the north entrance leading directly to the escalator is closed and the permeability of the building is thereby impaired. So, to access the

escalator, one needs to go through the main entrance to the ground floor of the Forum, go up to the mezzanine, and reach the ticket check-in entrance. Only those who have purchased tickets for the Paris view or the museum can access the upper floors, either by the escalator or by the lifts. The escalator was designed to stop and access each level, but in fact does not provide access to the second and third levels (except for experts and researchers, who can access the Kandinsky Library on the third level from the escalator). Members of the public who have purchased museum tickets are allowed to access the museum on the fourth and fifth floors and galleries of temporary exhibitions on the sixth floor from the escalator, while those who only have Paris view tickets are not permitted to get into any of the exhibitions, and can only have an experience of the escalator and the view of Paris from the corridors outside exhibition rooms in the envelope of the building. In this sense, the upper spaces are not that public, they are more like consumption spaces, the architectural concept of cultural liberation is not completely realised.

The Musée National d'Art Moderne (MNAM), which houses permanent collections of modern and contemporary art works, functions as the major tourist destination, with the entrance on the fifth floor and exit on the fourth level. The journey of the museum starts with modern collections (1905–1965) on the fifth floor, and then down to contemporary art (from the 1980s until today) on the fourth floor. The interdisciplinary concept is followed in the organisation of the exhibition. Multiple disciplines are involved – painting, sculpture, graphic arts, photography, experimental cinema, new media, design and architecture. Over time, the collections have grown spectacularly, from about 17,000 works in 1977 to over 65,000 today.[191] The presentation of modern art collections are highlighted in a circuit organised based on historic sequences, where the key landmarks and figures provide a clear picture about genealogies, transitions and associations. The presentation of the Centre Pompidou's contemporary collections looks at recent creations including art, architecture and design in diverse formats. Nearly 180 artists, architects and designers from over 55 countries have so far had their creations displayed in this section.

[191] Ibid., p. 64.

On both of the two levels, small individual exhibition modules in various formats are arranged in a sequential order throughout the circuit, focusing on different themes and artists. These modules are renewed every two years and designed as study and research areas by the organisation team of the museum. This enables the museum to be a platform for the continuous exploration of art history, rather than being a place of information dissemination only. In addition to exhibition spaces, there is a place especially for collections of new films and videos on the fourth floor. It possesses over 2,000 video and audio tapes, installations and multimedia works, artists' websites, and experimental films. These media creations are produced by artists from different countries working in various disciplines, from visual arts to cinema, from dance to music, and from theatre to architecture.[192] These creations, which have been digitised in order to be viewable onsite on computer screens in the media collection room, provide valuable reference materials in contemporary art fields and aim to contact with wide public.

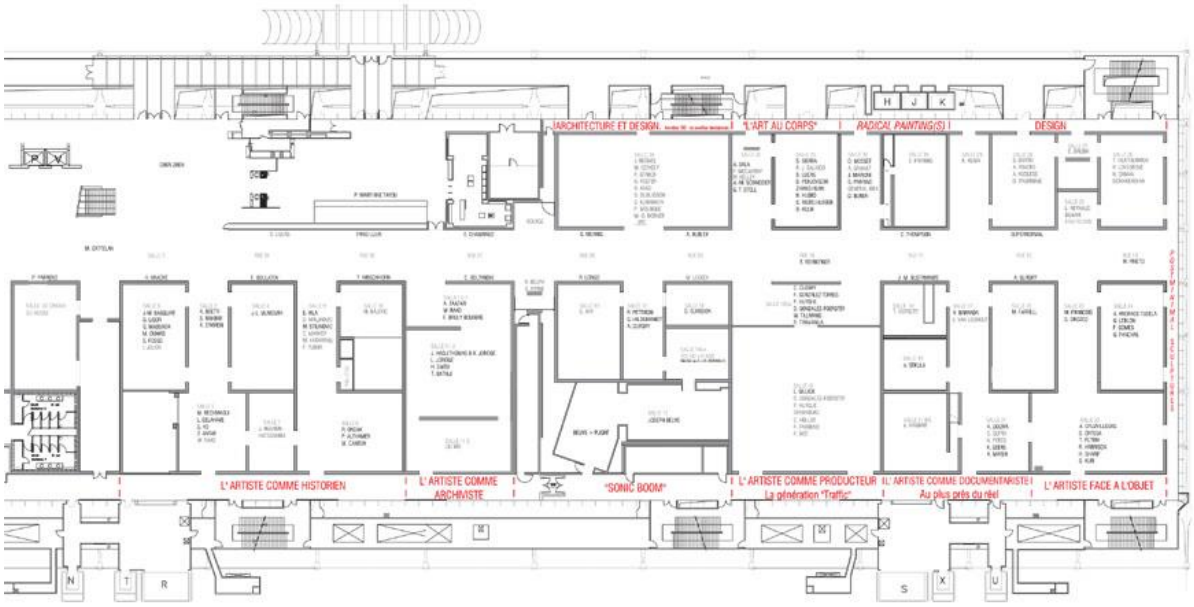

Figure 31. Plan of the exhibition modules (the fourth floor of Centre Pompidou).

[192] Ibid., p. 65.

Figure 32. Exhibition modules arranged in a linear order connected by a wide corridor.

Figure 33. Room for collections of films and other media on the fourth floor of Centre Pompidou.

The top floor houses the major exhibition areas, but is also only accessible to those with tickets. The entire floor is divided into two galleries, along with a restaurant. The exhibitions programmed in the galleries aim to attract as broad a public as possible through following the principles of societal and multi-disciplinary approaches. Each of the galleries presents two shows per year. Historical exhibitions and thematic contemporary exhibitions are both involved, in order to maintain Centre Pompidou's identity as both a museum and a centre of

creation.[193] Galerie 1 runs historical and thematic exhibitions alternately, while Galerie 2 is used for one-person shows of contemporary artists. Half of the exhibitions are monographic, and each exhibition is a suitable occasion for multiple activities, including lectures, meetings, performances and film cycles.

Figure 34. The top-floor restaurant in Centre Pompidou.

2.2.3 Summary

As shown in the illustrations of the actual use of the building, the Centre has sought to retain in practice the "conceptual meaning" claimed by the architects. The concept of flexibility has been reflected through the programming of diverse events in the Forum, the Children's Gallery and temporary exhibition areas as well as on the Piazza. The transparent façade which enables visual contact between the inside and outside of the building reinforces the building's relation with the urban – both the immediate surroundings, such as the Piazza, and the larger urban landscape – while the visible exhibitions in the galleries emphasise the relationship between the interior and the surrounding street. Furthermore, following the implications of the design concept, Centre Pompidou indeed functions as a large information-exchange machine. Information about artistic creation is disseminated through multiple channels – exhibition

[193] Bidaine, *Centre Pompidou*, p. 76.

galleries, studios, workshops, shops, libraries, cinemas, museums and other settings such as signboards and LED screens. Information exchanged between disciplines can be identified in the Centre, where departments are mutually supportive. Cinemas, galleries and children's studios act as an extension of the museum, while the museum gives those departments ideas for activity programming. Cinematic showings can be arranged by the Public Information Library for events, festivals and information dissemination. The collaboration between different departments at Centre Pompidou makes information circulation possible within the Centre, so enabling all departments to keep each other active and vibrant.

Liberating culture is a keynote of the "conceptual meaning". The playful forms, the transparent façade and the legible structural system overturn the traditional understanding of a museum as representing elite culture. The concept was to have a cultural building accessible to all, and in reality there are various events and programmes free to the public, such as children's workshops and exhibitions in Espace 315 and the South Gallery. However, the management teams of the Centre have in fact changed some of the architects' original intentions. For example, many of the entrances architects designed have been closed by the Centre because of organisation and safety concerns, which to some degree impairs the high level of accessibility expected at the beginning. Moreover, though cultural liberation was stressed as a major concept, some of the spaces are not that public in a pragmatic sense, since they are more like consumption spaces, including the cafe, Children's Gallery, museum, escalator, viewing corridors and patios. These places are not accessible unless one has purchased a ticket. Those activities take place there are not available to be freely enjoyed but rather are to be consumed by paying customers. Cultural liberation has not been implemented completely, and culture has been partly transformed into commercial products.

Centre Pompidou can be considered a vicarious achievement of Archigram; it is an "instant city" – "indeterminate, superserviced, media-saturated, pop, popular".[194] Things can hardly be predetermined in the building. Information is exchanged instantly and events happens transiently. Contemporary programmes are carried out in and around the building, such as art

[194] Simon Sadler (2005), *Archigram: Architecture without Architecture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 163.

exhibitions, performances, and film viewings. Different media are highly involved and constitute a working interface between people and arts, different disciplines, the building and the city. The Centre serves the public, individuals from plural cultural backgrounds, instead of cultural hegemony or any monistic narrative, rendering the building a carnival of popular culture. Therefore, the building is the design of the ever-new, a varying evolution, in a continual state of becoming, and moving towards open-ended answers. The idea of the "instant city" is also embodied in the design of Parc de la Villette. The meaning of the space is not pre-determined in the design concept; the architect left it to be produced by users through actual experience. Popular arts, such as music performance, frequently happen in the park. The exact nature of such events could not have been anticipated at the design stage – they are indeterminant and transient and actively emerge when people are actually engaged with the space.

In brief, however, Centre Pompidou basically follows what was anticipated in the "conceptual meaning" of the building, though imperfectly in practice. Led by the desire to liberate culture, the concepts of being related with the urban surroundings, being an information exchanger and being highly flexible and accessible are transformed into "pragmatic meaning". The design concept of Centre Pompidou is not only about creating an iconic image for the city of Paris, although the visual symbol of the Centre was important for Paris and France in regaining a better international reputation for arts and culture. Rather, the architects chose to turn their attention to social engagement issues, and how the building would function to accommodate these issues. They proposed the ambition of liberating culture for the public as the basic value running throughout the design. It is this value which focuses the Centre on social and functional matters instead of pure visual symbolism, and that gives rise to the mutual permeation of "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning". The design concept pragmatically considered the social-cultural context and transferred this into the spatial design, while in practical use, how the building functions follows what was imagined during the design phase, thus enabling "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" to be associated.

Chapter 3. Deconstruction: The Containment Relationship of "Conceptual Meaning" and "Pragmatic Meaning"

This chapter goes further to see how these two ways of meaning are associated, so as to reconfirm that the project is both conceptually and practically important, especially that "pragmatic meaning" has a crucial role in identifying "conceptual meaning". It will attempt to explain a case in which "pragmatic meaning" is contained in "conceptual meaning" in a deconstructive project. Deconstruction is a linguistic concept that asserts that an object has no essential meaning, and that meaning needs to be generated by users according to their individual situations when they use the object. Therefore, in the deconstructive idea, the whole meaning of an object has to be fulfilled in practice. Parc de la Villette in Paris is selected as an example to clarify this containment relationship. Parc de la Villette is a project with a strong concept. The architect conceptually designed three spaces as a disjunctive synthesis, without completely defining the specific function of any single space. The architect had an idea in his mind as he was formulating the design concept that the whole story of the park could not be achieved through the architect's conceptual intentions, but should be completed by users' practice in actual spaces. Though the architect proposed a strong concept for the park, the concept did not try to fixedly define the meaning of the space; it contained flexible room for users to define the whole meaning in a dynamic way. The architect embedded in his concept this idea that the whole meaning of the park should be left to be fulfilled in actual experience by its future users. As users interact with spaces and events are dynamically happening in these spaces, this is when "pragmatic meaning" is produced. Only after "pragmatic meaning" is achieved in actual spaces will the "conceptual meaning", the idea of deconstruction, be proved to have been accomplished – "pragmatic meaning" determines the fulfilment of the "conceptual meaning". The "conceptual meaning" is not the whole; it leaves blank space to be filled by "pragmatic meaning". The whole is always being delayed, to be defined through actual practice. Therefore, in the case of deconstruction, "pragmatic meaning" is seen as being included in "conceptual meaning".

The design concept of Parc de la Villette seems more philosophical than that of Centre

Pompidou. The architect borrowed the linguistic concept of “deconstruction” in the process of finding design ideas for Parc de la Villette. But there are still some potential deconstructive ideas that can be found in the design of Centre Pompidou – for example, the ideas of pluralism, anti-centralism, the focus on individual experience, changes and transformations. Nevertheless, the concept of Centre Pompidou is not associated with any explicit philosophy as we find with the Parc de la Villette. That might be because the influence of philosophy became much greater in architecture in the 1980s, under the influence of philosophical architects such as Bernard Tschumi. Centre Pompidou was designed ten years before Parc de la Villette. Tschumi was working in a culture which already included Centre Pompidou and its influence, which was helpful for him in making a kind of association between architecture and philosophy.

Being created in the post-structuralist context, both Centre Pompidou and Parc de la Villette are imbued with the idea of pluralism. For Centre Pompidou, designed in the light of cultural liberation, high culture is no longer appreciated, and popular culture is stressed. The concern is with public consciousness, public interests and things that used to be supressed. Lively and plural parts of the culture that were debased by high culture become meaningful. The design of Parc de la Villette follows the idea of pluralism. The concept is not a top-down dogma but requires people’s diverse experience to make it fully interpreted. The architect merely created a framework of space for the park, leaving elastic room for “pragmatic meaning”, the meaning that emerges from users’ experience, to fill the concept. Therefore, in concept, it accepts the plurality of architectural meaning, denies the inflexibility and monism of meaning dominated by architects, and admits that meaning can grow dynamically, accidentally and diversely.

3.1 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a trend of thought first developed in linguistic, which spread into architecture in the 1980s. It tends to overturn what had been advocated by previous the previous trends of structuralism and logocentrism. Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, is best known for developing a form of semiotic analysis: deconstruction. Bernard Tschumi is one

of the deconstructionist architects who acutely caught this idea and strove to apply it to architectural thinking and practice. What will follow is a brief review of Derrida's concept of deconstruction and Tschumi's struggle in deconstructive architecture, before the chapter turns to Tschumi's project, Parc de la Villette, in order to analyse the relationship between "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" in a deconstructive design.

3.1.1 The brief of deconstruction

The transition of post-structuralism breaks it apart from any form of transcendence, from any possibility of ontological focus; namely, it shifted from explaining single true reality to free understanding, from structuralism to anti-structuralism. In structural aesthetics, there is a foundational framework, a binary opposition – signifier and signified. Signifiers exist in many forms, such as words written or printed on paper, diagrams, drawings, paintings, sounds of music or the form of architecture, while signifieds exist only in the brain, in the form of ideas, concepts or ideologies. We pass "immaterial" ideas from our brains to other people by putting them into "material" form, the words. As the "material" sounds pass to others' ears, another person will decode the sounds into ideas in his/her brain. What enables ideas to pass from brain to brain is that those "immaterial" ideas are one-to-one joined with "material" words: there is one-to-one correspondence between signifieds and signifiers.[195] This one-to-one correspondence implies that all the meanings have already been structured in the words, and the singular "truth" is immanent in language or inflexibly links with language, so that language is superior and dominant within a certain system. This is the core idea of logocentrism; however, it is something that post-structuralism denies and something should be deconstructed. Meaning can be regarded as constructed from outside a word or an object, instead of being considered as residing within that word or object. Words or objects do not have inherent meaning – it is readers/users who produce particular meanings through their experience in particular circumstances.

[195] Jorge Glusberg (1991), *Deconstruction: A Student Guide*, London: Academy Editions, pp. 32–33.

Logocentrism is an ideological tradition of Western philosophy which originated in ancient Greece, and it is what Derrida intended to overthrow and deconstruct. However, the idea of logocentrism seems not to have been spread to East Asia, as the philosophical ideas there do not seem to follow the logocentric tradition. Derrida sees the Western philosophies that are rooted in logocentrism as "philosophy", while other thoughts or ideologies are not within the genealogy of "philosophy". Derrida visited China in September 2001 and gave a series of lectures and had conversations with Chinese philosophy scholars. During a conversation with Professor Wang Yuanhua, a famous literary critic, Derrida mentioned that to his way of thinking China had no philosophy, but only thoughts or ideologies. These words shocked the people around him, but then Derrida explained that he did not mean to debase Chinese ideas: in fact to him, thoughts are the equals of philosophies, and Western philosophy cannot be seen as the hegemony of culture. What Derrida wanted to stress was that traditional Chinese ideas are not in the genealogy of the "philosophy" which was shaped through logocentrism. Chinese traditions fortunately escaped from the influence of logocentrism. Therefore, Chinese ideas are not a part of the logocentric philosophy that Derrida would like to deconstruct.[196]

In fact, Derrida's deconstruction shares one point with traditional Chinese philosophy – both of them are inclusive. To deconstructionists, there is no universal and fixed meaning to anything, there is no essential reality capable of being measured; the interpretation of the world can be achieved in varied ways by observers and their observations, depending on their socio-cultural backgrounds and the ways in which they see the world. As a result, meanings can be produced and are constantly changing according to particular situations.[197] Deconstruction accepts both commonness and differences, as do Chinese philosophies. Commonness and differences exist at the same time between different individuals, cultures or ethnicities. If there is no "commonness", the "differences" could not be identified. If each individual, culture or ethnicity emphasises only their own distinctions, there are catastrophic

[196] Xiaozhen Du & Ning Zhang (2003), *Derrida's Lectures in China*, Beijing: Central Edition and Translation Publishing House, pp. 139–140.

[197] Antonio Sandu (2011), "Assumption of Post-Structuralism in Contemporary Epistemology", *Postmodern Openings*, vol. 7 (7), pp. 39–52, p. 49.

consequences such as cultural conflict and aggression.[198] Chinese traditional philosophy will be discussed particularly in the next chapter, where the ideological roots of it and its influence in contemporary architectural practice will be further explained.

According to Benedikt, Jacques Derrida's ideas of deconstruction are uniquely productive for architecture.[199] Derrida attacks several traditional beliefs which used to be foundations in the Western philosophical trajectory. One of his considerable emphases is the querying of the capacity of language under the shackles of logocentrism. He seeks to reject logocentrism by claiming the fullness of the meaning of human experience, which exceeds the capacity of language to report on it.

The deconstructive aesthetics, to Derrida, is as a subversive alien, the foreign body who violates the existing constructional forms and has already inhabited the interior of its host.[200] Benedikt concludes four principles that come from Jonathan Culler's writing about Derrida's ideas of deconstruction, and attempts to translate those four principles as four lenses through which to look at architectural practice.

The first principle is "différance". Différance literally has three meanings. The first is "differences" – the spacing and the distinctions between things, including vocabularies and the dimensions in one vocabulary where meanings of different dimensions are separated from each other. The second is "deferral" – the process of passing along or postponing, of suspension or protraction, the spacing in time. Différance in this sense is to temporise, to defer, and to detour, suspending the accomplishment or fulfilment of a will. The third meaning is "differing" – disagreeing, dissenting and dissembling.[201]

In this sense différance attempts not to be identical or discernible, as it always tries to conceal

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[198] Du & Zhang, *Derrida's Lectures in China*, p. 140.

[199] Michael Benedikt (1991), *Deconstructing the Kimbell: An Essay on Meaning and Architecture*, New York: Lumen, p. 2.

[200] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 23.

[201] Benedikt, *Deconstructing the Kimbell*, pp. 10–11.

the fullness of anything.[202] The principle of différance tries to reverse the tradition of logocentrism. Logocentrism assumes an existence of a fixed meaning behind something, prior to actual practice according to different individual situations. It advocates the unity of thinking and language, believes that language can perfectly express thoughts, in order to achieve objective truth. On the contrary, différance denies the existence of cut-and-dried essential meaning, and suggests instead that meaning is distinctive from individual to individual, always in the process of deferral, varying and evolving, and not always consistent between different things. Différance belongs neither to the voice nor to writing in the usual sense, where the words are located. Différance happens over a period of time across spaces.[203] It always tries to take away the familiarity which links one thing to another, it sunders things apart, into individual pieces, unfamiliar to each other. Therefore, to Derrida, there is never a sort of consistent meaning; there are always differences in "the represented and the representative, the signified and signifier, simple presence and the reproduction".[204] Différance rejects unity and perfection, which is unachievable in phenomenal reality. Rather, différance offers infinite real possibilities, differences and distinctive existences. It presents itself in the sensible world in sensible forms that we are able to witness. In that world, language is merely one immaterial presentation but more space is left for more comprehensive understanding and creation.

As différance suggests there is no essential meaning in each vocabulary, nothing is a self-evident matter, and thus there must be at least two elements or ideas mutually complementary so as to define each other. It is of no value to indicate one thing by itself. One cannot recognise "black" without "white", and one cannot notice "up" without "down", just as one cannot have presence without absence. The mere presence of something has neither value nor meaning unless the absence of other things is simultaneously recognised. The presence of something stands out on the basis of the absence of other things, while the absence of something lies behind the presence. The recognition of a pattern on drawing paper

[202] Jacques Derrida (1982), *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 8.

[203] Ibid., p. 5.

[204] Jacques Derrida (1973), *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, p. 52.

as substantial matter depends on the blank space of the rest of the page. The impalpable void of a jug is formed by the concrete material surrounding it. Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion shows a binary opposition of presence and absence by simultaneous affirmation and denial of substance with the alternation of wall and glass.[205]

The second principle Derrida claims is "hierarchy reversal".[206] He criticises the fact that the idealisation of Western metaphysics causes all aesthetical and ideological distinctions to be hierarchical. If a system of philosophy is set up, the terms playing within the system are not always treated equally. Such terms are usually related to one another in a dual structure, in which one term dominates while the other is suppressed, such as "truth" and "fallacy", "soul" and "flesh", "consciousness" and "unconsciousness", and "rationality" and "sensibility". The terms in each of these dual structures are in a definite hierarchical order that is historically widely believed to be natural. What deconstruction looks for is, first, what is being suppressed under the shackles of some hierarchical "truth" and, second, the ways in which hierarchy can be overturned or polarity reversed.

Derrida thinks that such dual terms have some distinctions between them, but that there is no hierarchical order – "truth" is on an equal level to "fallacy", "soul" on an equal level to "flesh", and "philosophy", rooted in logocentrism, on an equal level to Eastern ideas. Moreover, those dual terms mutually interact and are included in each other – "truth" and "fallacy" cannot be completely separated, and nor can "soul" and "flesh". The resistance to hierarchical dualism is linked to the Chinese Yin–Yang idea, which believes that the Yin–Yang unit is the basic element constituting the world, but that Yin and Yang are neither independent nor hierarchical – they are indispensable to each other, mutually defined in relation to each other, and always trying to reach or convert into each other. Influenced by this Yin–Yang idea, Chinese culture displays an ambiguity in dualism. This ambiguity is embodied in the way of thinking about the relationship between intellect and body, theory and practice, and elite and popular culture. Both elements in each of these dual concepts are equal to each other and are mutually

[205] Benedikt, *Deconstructing the Kimbell*, p. 14.

[206] Ibid., p. 17.

inclusive. Therefore, Chinese cultural customs lay more emphasis on the relationship between things than on the intrinsic meaning of individual concepts. The ambiguity in dualism of Chinese culture, which serves as one of the important ideologies of Chinese tradition, will be further discussed in the next chapter.

For architects, there are usually typologies in their minds prior to practice, arranged in hierarchical orders. The superior ones are expressed by exposure, enlargement, or special materials and coloration, while the inferior ones are suppressed by concealment, disregarding or shrinkage, or special techniques enable them to fade away from dominant presentations. Therefore, architectural style is a consequence resulting from the selection of certain patterns, with some dimensions reinforced and other dimensions suppressed. As to clarity about how those patterns run in practice, Benedikt finds some examples in architectural projects.[207] He finds Frank Lloyd Wright's style is consistent in the repression of vertical walls and the expression of horizontal roofs. Roofs are enlarged and ground contact is spread, while walls are faded away under the domination of roofs. Differently from Wright, Le Corbusier valorises the wall and represses other elements, Robert Venturi valorises the window, and Louis Kahn valorises servant spaces rather than served spaces. Architectural style is a kind of playing of the hierarchical orders of elements of which architecture consists. As a result, many architects design buildings with their preferred forms in mind and design from the outside in, since the appearance of the building directly implies the already established hierarchical orders in their mind. It is interesting to see that buildings usually have official views, the valorised viewing angle. When these views appear in magazines, they lead us to learn the official appearance of certain buildings. Therefore, we will know something the photographer would like us to know, while ignoring something hidden behind this which might not be good to know.

Another principle which is closely aligned with the critique of hierarchy reversal is the opposition of "marginality and centrality".[208] Margins are places close to edges or boundaries which distinguish outside from inside. Centres imply the depth and heart of certain areas. They

[207] Ibid., pp. 23–25.

[208] Ibid., p. 29.

are places of concentration where actions are controlled or from where they originate. A centre is remote from its margin in every direction and is completely embedded in its area, while a margin is a long distance from the centre and is always at the limits of the centre's control. Margins and centre are opposing and interdependent.

There are some architectural phenomena which demonstrate a marginal-central relationship. If we look at a room, usually the peripheral zone of the space is occupied by the more stationary, less frequently used pieces of furniture such as cupboards, drawers, bookcases and the like, while the central zone of the room, usually left more open and able to be more flexibly used, is where the main living activities take place. Benedikt finds that Frank Lloyd Wright brings a variety of furniture into thick exterior walls, where window seats, cabinets and ceiling drops draw a sense of habitability into exterior walls.[209] This design offers a larger space in the centre of the room for living activities, so that these living activities that are intentionally set as the centre are more highly valorised. Sometimes furniture settings emphasise a hierarchy of different programmed activities. For example, it is common in the furniture settings of libraries to place book stacks in the centre and leave peripheral areas for reading, which implies that, for libraries, books are central and the most emphasis is laid on them, while reading is marginal. However, some libraries emphasise librarian control and reading as the central point, by setting the librarian's desk at the centre, with reading desks around, and book stacks along the peripheries.[210] It is easy to perceive that the meaning of this layout is different from that of former one. However, as Benedikt points out, Mies van der Rohe's glass-box buildings show an ignoring of the repression of the margins.[211] The furniture is free standing, and the glass curtain wall is thin, so one can walk to the very marginal edge of the interior space and look towards the outside. The interior margin has been compressed as much as possible. Furthermore, the fact that architectural ornamentation is quite commonly found around spatial edges, joints or boundaries conversely shows the importance of marginality as

[209] Ibid., p. 31.

[210] Ibid., p. 33.

[211] Ibid., p. 31.

opposed to centrality.

The avant-garde, the powerless and the un-valorised are considered to be at the margin of the social fields, while those who are established, powerful and valorised are said to be at the centre. Derrida's struggle is to wake up those who are at the margin, challenge the situation of the repression of the margin, and reverse what is at the centre. He uses a term, "parergon", which means a subsidiary aspect of something, namely, the margin.[212] In order to stress the importance of the parergon, he takes the frame of a painting as evidence, saying that the frame of painting does not function only to distinguish the painting from the wall or to be seen as embellishment; more importantly, it essentially serves to valorise the painting, to confirm that it is art. Likewise, the pedestal, podium or surroundings of a sculpture aims to reinforce the special role of the sculpture as art. Responding to Derrida's exemplification of painting and the frame, in architecture the elements that have been set as marginal, such as porches, planting, greenhouses, storage, garages and so on, are necessary and essential to some people; however, what has been regarded as central, such as the architectural concept, structure, symbolism, form and so on, for most people are remote and meaningless.

The last principle Derrida discusses is about "iterability and meaning".[213] Iterability means repetition, difference, alteration and thus singularity. If we inherit language, a philosophy or anything else, there is a sort of inert repetition. But when we inherit something, we do not only passively receive it. We often choose, filter, interpret and reaffirm. Thus, iterability occurs when we attempt to inherit something.[214] In terms of linguistics, the laws of language allow the production of new sentences through the permutation of words. That a word can function as a word is due to its capacity to be repeatedly used, as the meaning of a word depends on its iterability, the capacity to be repeated. Words which demonstrate iterability are adaptable and reusable in various contexts. The stability of the denotative or connotative meanings of a

[212] Ibid., p. 34.

[213] Ibid., p. 37.

[214] Paul Patton & Terry Smith (2002), *Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction Engaged, the Sydney Seminars*, Sydney: Power, pp. 76–77.

word and its recognisability in different contexts is what enables language to become a constant system. The capacity of repetition, or iterability, is the precondition for the existence of meaning, as it ensures one single word can function as a unit of meaning capable of being applied to various contexts. Oral language comes originally from random sounds, but once a certain sound is repeatedly used to express certain meaning among a society or a group of people, the sound has become language. So, as Benedikt points out, perhaps the most fundamental evidence that unconscious expression, whether in the form of sounds or other forms of expression, transforms into language is the case of repeated use of a certain expression, whereby that unconscious expression becomes an intentional resource with a certain meaning shared within a collective space.[215]

It seems that architecture has the same capacity for repetition as language. As we can see, plenty of architecture has repeated elements, such as tiles, windows, bricks, beams and columns, as well as structured spatial forms, geometrical figures and so on. Moreover, buildings pursuing the same architectural styles are repeated within a region, or spread throughout different regions. Architecture without a style seems hardly possible. Architects seem to fear to use unique materials, structures and forms in design practice, because they are afraid of making any mistake. They usually seek to repeat what have already done in former projects, following certain existing styles and design methods, in order to deliver their own intentions. Some repeated solutions in architecture were once unique to particular problems, but when they are adopted by other architects in later cases, those solutions will become architectural language with the capacity of iteration. This iteration can be found in numerous projects of one architect, because the architect is apt to apply and experiment with a certain thematic language through different projects in order to explore his design philosophy. Besides this thematic language of individual architects, different decades have their own mainstream themes and popular fashions, which periodically shift according to relevant cultural backgrounds. The attempt to thematise architectural design ensures the capacity of repetition of certain architectural forms, thereby enabling the formation and the spread of certain

[215] Benedikt, *Deconstructing the Kimbell*, p. 40.

architectural language.

Benedikt argues that it is inappropriate to translate linguistic theory of repetition into architecture, since the repetition of architectural language (either styles or themes) might undermine rather than support the intentionality of architecture to attach itself to the world.[216] Iteration does not create meaning but only conveys it into different circumstances. The significance of iteration is to promise that meaning will come out under certain recognisable language systems. So language is the by-product of meaning: it is not the locus where meaning resides. However, the very essence of meaning is the picture we witness rather than read from text – the most sensible and resonant images of living. The meaning does not lie in the metaphysical or logical claim of the text, but in living moments and visceral desires, while text is something employed for the explanation of meaning. Architecture bears meaning by recreating, reproducing and reconstructing the structures of past situations rather than by arbitrarily associating meaning with existing architectural language, through the association of signifiers and signifieds.[217]

There are two kinds of iteration. “Horizontal” iteration refers to one form that spreads from one building to another under the dimension of space, while “vertical” iteration refers to the evolution through time, which transforms earlier forms into later ones. The interior growth of architectural meaning over time is that of “vertical” iteration. This kind of iteration is what architecture should employ.[218] Meaning, therefore, is ever-changing and re-forming over time. The dislocation, re-grounding and re-contextualisation of architecture are nodal points in the axis of “vertical” iteration and are necessary for the happening of new iterations. As a result, architectural meaning ought to be a différance. Meanings are changeable through time, and thus are distinctive from one moment to another. Meanings created in different moments might differ from each other. This echoes Archigram’s idea of indeterminacy. Meaning does not look towards a fixed answer, but open-ended, and always in a continual state of becoming

[216] Ibid., p. 43.

[217] Ibid., p. 47.

[218] Ibid.

and renewing.[219] One valorised form (language) is not permanently valid, but forms are permanently transforming. So the formation of meaning is all the time being and always unable to reach an end-point. The final meaning is always in suspension.

3.1.2 Tschumi's discovery of an alternative order of architecture

Derrida's idea of deconstruction has been translated into architecture, in both theory and practice. Deconstruction has already been a category of architectural school. The endeavour of looking for repressed ideas in modernist architecture and the establishment of renewed meaning of architecture was begun in the 1960s. During the 1980s the idea of deconstruction in architecture was promoted widely. The concept of decentring, disjunction and rejection of existing fixed order was employed in this architectural revolution. A group of deconstructionist architects and their projects began to emerge, including Richard Meier's Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt and his High Museum in Atlanta, Georgia; Eisenman and Robertson's Housing Block 5 in Berlin and their Centre for the Visual Arts at Ohio State University; Zaha Hadid's scheme for the Peak in Hong Kong; and Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette in Paris.[220]

Bernard Tschumi is one of the most important deconstructionist architects who devoted himself to seeking the margin which had been ignored or suppressed in the modernist hierarchical order. He discovered an alternative way of reading architecture based on deconstructive ideas. This alternative order is not about static building forms, which were the priority for modernists, but about the priority of experience, programmes and events taking place dynamically in the space at every moment.

Experiencing pleasure in architecture was for many generations considered something decadent, even reactionary.[221] Modernists think of architecture as a geometrical spatial order

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[219] Sadler Simon (2005), *Archigram: Architecture without Architecture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p.93.

[220] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 12.

[221] Bernard Tschumi (1994), *Architecture and Disjunction*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 81–83.

rather than a pictorial or experiential sequence. The architecture of pleasure is something marginal to the centre of the modernist orthodoxy, and is suppressed under the hierarchy of modernist "truth". Tschumi, on the one hand, agrees that architecture refers to a dematerialised or conceptual mind, but on the other hand he insists architecture should be more like an empirical event accommodation that is concerned with the senses, perceptions and experience of the body within the space. Further, he asserts that the pleasure of architecture does not depend merely on the pleasure of geometry or space.[222] Indeed, without the signs of geometrical or spatial orders, some architecture will lose its meaning of presence, such as Egyptian pyramids or the Chinese Forbidden City; thus, geometrical and spatial orders still play a role as a necessary partner to the literary perceptions of architecture. However, without a concern for sensorial and experiential pleasure, architecture will be reduced to a frozen and hollow symbol.

Tschumi has noticed a dilemma in architectural practice.[223] Architects, on the one hand, would like to develop their own independent design philosophies, but on the other hand they have to accept social requirements and constraints, since they depend financially on society; if they separate too much from widely accepted social ideologies, their architecture will be accused of elitism. Nevertheless, Tschumi encourages architects to continue to adhere to their particular philosophies and question the existing widely adopted orders, because what is considered a necessity of architecture today might be denied and disregarded as a non-necessity in the future. Tschumi believes we need a renewed order and that this order should no longer be the imitation of the past orders. Architecture contributes to creating breaking point upon the veil between reality and illusions. As a result, Tschumi is struggling to save his unique philosophies by challenging modernist ideas and exploring an idea of architectural deconstruction.

Tschumi's idea of the ultimate pleasure of architecture lies in neither concept nor immediate experience alone, but on the junction between the two. Either of the two alone, under two-

[222] Ibid., pp. 85–86.

[223] Ibid., p. 87.

value logic, is not an ideal solution, but the junction between the two transcends all the thinking based around binary opposition derived from the founding principle of Western philosophy. Tschumi's junction of abstract concept and practical experience is the merging of rationality and irrationality – this ambiguous pleasure of rationality and irrationality is a kind of "eroticism".[224] Tschumi's "eroticism" is a theoretical concept, with nothing in common with the formalist's concern for "erotic" forms of building, but it is a subtle emotion. Individually, neither a concept nor an experience is "erotic". Only when the concept becomes associated with the practical experience can the architecture be "erotic". Therefore, the ultimate pleasure of architecture, in Tschumi's view, the architecture of "eroticism", transcending either concept or experience alone, but requiring consciousness as well as voluptuousness, is the junction of reasonable concept and immediate experience of space, the pleasure of rational order and the pleasure of irrational sensuality. Consequently, to Tschumi, exceeding modernist dogmas of past social and economic constraints by disrupting functionalist forms and turning attention to sensuality is not only the subversion of the past, but more significantly, it is the maintaining of the capacity of architectural "eroticism".[225]

Due to the dominance of modernist ideology and the ignorance of sensorial experience, the notion of the programmes and events taking place in the space has remained a forbidden field for decades. Even until the early 1980s, programmatic concerns were still rejected by modernist doctrines.[226] Few architects dared to elaborate programmes for the space and explore the relationship between physical spaces and programmes. Architecture has become about eye-catching images in magazines; or models, films and pictures in exhibitions or galleries, presented as art works to be watched. These, to a large degree, render architecture a passive object instead of a place where dynamic activities emerge and encounter each other.

Chinese garden architecture (Jiangnan Garden) also intends to achieve sensorial and experiential pleasure. The aim of gardening is bodily pleasure, which leads to the pleasure of

[224] Ibid., p. 89.

[225] Ibid., p. 92.

[226] Ibid., p. 141.

the mind – creating poems or making music in the garden are both bodily and mindful pleasures. “Aesthetic sense” has for a long time been the highest pursuit in artistic creation for Chinese men of letters, no matter whether in poetry, painting, calligraphy or gardening. It must be sensed and experienced in the body as a consequence of exposure to certain images (or other artistic works) when one is in a suitably contemplative state of mind. Chinese culture does not traditionally have a definite intellect–body dualism, but sees the world as an extension of the body: bodily senses are lenses through which we look at the world and shape the mind. This idea is consonant with Richard Shusterman’s “somaesthetics”, which asserts that knowledge is not absolutely constructed through intellectual thinking, but through bodily experience. Tschumi’s idea of architectural “eroticism” also shares something with somaesthetics, as it sees the ultimate pleasure of architecture as the junction between concept and the immediate bodily experience: the concept needs the experience before it is fully achieved, and this idea is applied in Tschumi’s design of Parc de La Villette. Therefore, both Tschumi’s idea of pleasure and the Chinese theory of body are consistent with somaesthetics. The traditional Chinese ideas of body will be discussed in the next chapter and how the idea of “somaesthetics” is embodied in a contemporary project will also be illustrated in the design of Xiangshan Campus.

Contrary to the functionalists’ negation of programme, Tschumi notices the strong links between architecture and events – linked, as he points out, in the same way as the guard is linked to the prisoner, and the doctor to the patient. According to Tschumi’s definition, an event is an incident, an occurrence, a particular item in a programme. A programme is a sequence of events. Events can encompass particular uses, singular functions or isolated activities.[227] Tschumi argues there is no architecture without any action, event or programme, and there is an intensive relationship between individuals and their surroundings. Tschumi names this intensive relationship the “violence of architecture”, in order to represent the mutual violation between physical spaces and bodies. [228] Bodies violate spaces when they

[227] Bernard Tschumi (2012), *Architecture Concepts: Red Is Not a Color*, New York: Rizzoli, p. 106.

[228] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, pp. 121–123.

intrude into the pre-existent spatial order of architecture, while spaces violate bodies when they inflict on bodies a must-accept order, such as the imposition of a narrow corridor on a large crowd, or the overwhelming sense of a space on its users.

Spaces and events can be, at times, positively reciprocal with one another. When architectural spaces and events are totally independent from each other but condition each other's existence, that is, users' needs will determine architects' creation of spaces, while architects' design decisions will then dominate users' attitudes and activities in spaces, so that the two are interacted. Spaces are qualified by events, just as events are qualified by spaces. Centre Pompidou is an example in this case. The Piazza in front of Centre Pompidou is qualified as an urban plaza because it accommodates various events and programmes held by Centre Pompidou; and those events are qualified to take place because the Piazza offers an open-air space, serving as an extension of the Centre. Events and spaces do not merge, but they affect one another. Some of the interactions between spaces and bodies can be ritualised, and these rituals can build up into solidified relationships between events and spaces.[229] The traditional Western wedding taking place in the church and the traditional Chinese wedding taking place in the bridegroom's house are both fixed rituals in different cultures. These rituals imply a deep relationship between Western wedding programmes and the church space, and between Chinese wedding programmes and the Chinese traditional residential space.

However, Tschumi also claims that spaces and events occasionally contradict each other, when they constantly transgress each other's rules – that is, a place appears incompatible with its intended use.[230] When an event is programmed in an physical space that is not appropriate to it, the rules of that event have been transgressed, while when some activities are spontaneously generated that are not in accordance with the spatial rules that the designer expected, the rules of that space have been transgressed. In such cases, there is less of a causal relationship between form and use – form does not follow function any more. Tschumi explores the disjunction between expected form and its expected use by denying that a

[229] Ibid., p. 126.

[230] Ibid., p. 132.

particular programme should correspond to a specific spatial form. He even goes further, to suggest that programmes can be housed in unexpected sites, in which it would be impossible to house them according to conventional orders, such as a stadium in Soho.[231] Tschumi calls this principle of using a given spatial configuration for a programme it was not intended for "crossprogramming".[232] This principle of dissociation of spaces and events, on the one hand, frees those spaces, as it rejects any constraint which could obstruct inspiration over the use of the space, so that its polyvalence is ensured. On the other hand, users are liberated, as it is not necessary for them to use the space according to an intended and fixed function, but rather the space can be used at will according to their intentions.

In addition, events and spaces are in some cases indifferent to each other, when a space is capable of accommodating a variety of different activities. Tschumi takes 1851 Crystal Palace as an example, in which the exotic stalls are arranged among the regular columnisation. The consideration of the form of the space does not depend on its utilitarian purposes.[233] But the identity of the exhibition building could be reinforced by the series of events carried out in the building. Hence, instead of creating a simple range of possible fixed uses, architects can also propose built structures with undefined or unexpected programmes.

Tschumi's idea of the disjunction of spaces and events implies the disjunction of architects and users, which is analogous to Roland Barthes' disjunction of authors and readers. Barthes points out in "The Death of the Author" that " as soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death…".[234] Architect's meaning production is always from his/her expected purpose, which does not act directly upon reality, so that it might be unhelpful in real practice. Once the building has been designed and built, the building will be

[231] Ibid., p. 147.

[232] Bernard Tschumi (1999), *Event-Cities: Praxis*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 155.

[233] Ibid., 159.

[234] Roland Barthes (1977), "The Death of the Author", *Image Music Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, London: Fontana Press, p. 142–148, p. 142.

away from the architect, the actual meaning that gained through real practice cannot be controlled by the architect but by the users. When this disjunction occurs, the meaning emerges from the reality is isolated from the architect's "conceptual meaning", which means that the architect enters his/her own "death". When the building is in real use, architects will lose power in producing events and "pragmatic meaning", it is users that directly make events happen in a certain space. Tschumi noticed the disjunction of architects and users, thus he claimed that the spaces and events could be contradictory and indifferent – the architect's expectation might not be consistent with user's practice, as users always make the events happen accidentally, unexpectedly and diversely, and this is what Tschumi kept in mind when he was designing Parc de la Villette – he conceptualised user's culture as part of the architect's intention and the concept needs user's practice to fulfil it.

Barthes also thinks that the author is never anything more than a person who writes, "just as *I* is nothing other than the instance of saying *I*: language knows a 'subject', not a 'person'".[235] After the text has been made by the author, the author's idea will never be important, and the text can be interpreted in multiple ways. In the production of a building, the architect creates conceptual ideas and physical spaces; the reception of the building needs the physical spaces to come into contact with the users as they make practical use of the spaces. What users know is the space, something they can engage with and make practical use of. The users' practice begins with an encounter with the space. What happened before the space was built is not necessarily related to users. The user knows the space, not the architect.

As Barthes implies, the temporality of the association of author and book is different from that of book and reader. The author is considered as the past of his own book – the author pre-exists to and nourishes the book.[236] Then, the book is considered the past of its readers – it pre-exists to and nourishes the reader's mind. Therefore, author and reader seem as if standing at the two sides of a line, where the text is something in between, the line in the middle. The author's idea moves towards and shapes the text, and then the text helps to shape the reader's idea as he or she encounters it. There is a similar situation between the architect,

[235] Ibid., p. 145.

[236] Ibid.

the building and the user. The building is the line in the middle, and the line has two sides: the architect exists before the building, while the users come after it; thus the two sides of the line respectively refer to the production and the reception of the building. The production of the building involves the architect's idea and the building, analogous to Barthes' author and text, and the reception of the building involves the user's understanding and the building, analogous to Barthes' reader and text. The building is the product of the architect, it is the end of the architect's meaning production, and it is at the same time the start of the user's practice where "pragmatic meaning" will grow. Tschumi had this idea in mind, so that he tried to avoid the disjunction between his concepts and users' experience by conceptualising users' future "pragmatic meaning" as part of the architect's intention in the design of Parc de la Villette: its "conceptual meaning" is like an incomplete framework, which will be complete and fully interpreted when actual events happen in the space.

In "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative", Roland Barthes implies that the contents of a text could be changed, as they are not inherent to it.[237] If the contents of the text can be changed and reassembled, the narrative becomes an accidental narrative. The event happening in a particular space is similar to the event developing in a literary text. The space of Parc de la Villette is merely the structure of the "architectural narrative", the incomplete framework designed by the architect prior to "pragmatic meaning"; the contents can be flexibly added, changed and reassembled through users' actual experience, in order to complete the "architectural narrative". The relationship between space and event is not correspondent one-to-one any more. Modernism always offers architecture a definite function and expects that pre-planned events will happen according to the architect's intention. But Tschumi deconstructs this idea by redefining the relationship of spaces and events as diverse, dynamic, fragmental and ambiguous.

The events emerging in a space are always dynamic and unexpected, which imbues the space with multiple meanings. Architecture has multiple dimensions; it is the users and not the architect that make this multiplicity. The multiplicity of architecture is analogous to Barthes'

[237] Roland Barthes (1975), "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative", *New Literary History*, vol. 6 (2), pp. 237–272.

multiplicity of text. A text can consist of multiple meanings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other. There is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author but the reader. That is to say, the unity of a text is not in its origin; it is in its destination. Similar to architecture, "pragmatic meaning" looks towards the end, the result, or the consequence of the space; thus, the unity of the architecture is not in its original concept but in the end – namely, the events that happen in the architectural space. Therefore it is the users who experience the space, with their diverse individual purposes, that give architecture its multiplicity.

In short, there is no space without event. Architecture cannot be dissociated from events happening in it. Not only is the significance of events a matter of objective historical precedents, but events underline the importance of the relationship between abstraction and narrative – the platform for the juxtaposition of abstract concepts and immediate experiences.[238] An event is also an architectural concept. There is no concept without an event that qualifies the concept.[239] Architectural concept should not focus on concrete forms, materials and techniques, but on the programmatic events which could take place in the future spaces. Architectural concept is largely about the arrangement of a series of events. Experience in the space will see the realisation of these arranged events. Events are something considered at the stage of concept making, and the concept is qualified by events through actual experience. Therefore, events are included in concepts, and only when the programmed events have actually taken place in real spaces, when the experience has already been generated, will the concepts be fulfilled. This means that the "conceptual meaning" created by an architect contains not only an abstract theoretical part but also a pragmatic part, and only when "pragmatic meaning" has been produced in architecture through the actual experience of users will the "conceptual meaning" be completed. "Pragmatic meaning" is part of "conceptual meaning". The accomplishment of "conceptual meaning" is delayed until the space has been used in practice. As a result, under Tschumi's idea of deconstruction,

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[238] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 145.

[239] Tschumi, *Architecture Concepts*, p. 177.

“pragmatic meaning” is included in “conceptual meaning”, and the completion of “conceptual meaning” is deferred until “pragmatic meaning” emerges to fill it up: therefore, “pragmatic meaning” and “conceptual meaning” are in a relation of containment.

In *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Tschumi offers a different reading of architecture in which architectural narrative is presented by three synchronous but separated levels of “reality” – spaces, movements and events.[240] The dimension of movements is added by Tschumi to indicate the actual actions of bodies through spaces. The notation of movements is used as a means of blurring the conventional analysis of spaces. Movements are the sequences of physical actions by which bodies are capable of intruding into the controlled order of spaces. As bodies carve spaces through their motions, architecture is passively engaged with users, whose body pushes against established architectural rules.[241] In *The Manhattan Transcripts*, spaces are physical objects composed of buildings or urban spaces abstracted from maps and plans. Movements are recorded with diagrams. Events are abstracted from photographs.[242] These three disjunctive levels of sequences are equal to each other, apart from modernism’s debate on whether form or function dominates. Each level tells one dimension of a continuous experience, and when the three levels unite they will depict an overall story. The purpose of the tripartite mode of notations is to introduce an alternative order of experience, an order of sequences and time, subverting the previous formalist order; it also tends to question the widely used method of design presentations, such as plans, sections, axonometrics and perspectives, aiming to transcribe things normally removed from conventional architectural presentations, namely the complex relationship between spaces and their uses, between the set and the script, between "type" and "programme", and between objects and events. Therefore, this concept is simply about a new way of understanding architecture through the movie-like sequences of experiences taking place in sequential spaces, while the experience, as part of the concept, fills in the blank in “conceptual meaning” and completes it.

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[240] Bernard Tschumi (1994), *The Manhattan Transcripts*, London: Academy Editions.

[241] Ibid., p. 107.

[242] Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, pp. 8–9.

Tschumi creates an alternative means of looking at an architectural situation, through the effect of the disjunction of spaces, movements and events upon certain programmes. This alternative approach is about the anatomy of dynamic architectural programmes – events happening in spaces over time – replacing the modernists' anatomy of architectural space. Bodies act as active motivators of movements, as they actively interact with and become firmly associated with spaces. Bodies become the main subjects of architecture, the subjects where meaning is produced through actual experience, whereas spaces do not have any pre-attached meaning. Meaning comes from how the space interacts with bodies, which is transient, changeable and varied. Therefore, meaning does not depend mainly on abstract description of concepts or spaces, but on the proceeding programmes conducted by bodies over time. Thus, first, the meaning of architecture proposed by Tschumi follows Derrida's principle of différance. Second, as bodies are used to being suppressed in the traditional hierarchy of architecture, Tschumi's new order reverses modernism's neglect of the agency of the body. So this alternative order again echoes Derrida's principle of hierarchy reversal. The treatment of bodies instead of physical spaces as the central subject of architecture also responds to Derrida's struggle to wake up those who are at the margin and to replace those who are at the centre. Moreover, that ever-varying and ever-transforming meaning is constantly produced through bodily experience and dynamically emerges in architectural spaces could be seen as the "vertical" iteration of architecture according to Derrida's definition. Meanings update as the programmes conducted by bodies are varied over time, so that architectural meaning is not permanently stable, something sealed up in a fixed spatial form, but is permanently iterative with the movements of bodies, with the transforming of events, and with the growth of the interaction between spaces, events and bodies.

This new way of looking at architecture in *The Manhattan Transcripts* serves as the theoretical base for Tschumi's later project, Parc de la Villette. The following section will discuss how the concept of Parc de la Villette was worked out based on disjunctive principles. The focus of Tschumi's architecture is on neither the purely conceptual nor the purely experiential, but the junction between the two. Pragmatic concerns ought to be involved in concepts, while concepts are not completely self-evident, but rather need the help of actual experience in

order to be fulfilled. Hence, what actually happens in spaces will be discussed in the following section, with the intention of seeing how “pragmatic meaning”, being included in “conceptual meaning”, is produced through actual experience and how it functions to complete what “conceptual meaning” is unable to accomplish by itself in the case of deconstruction.

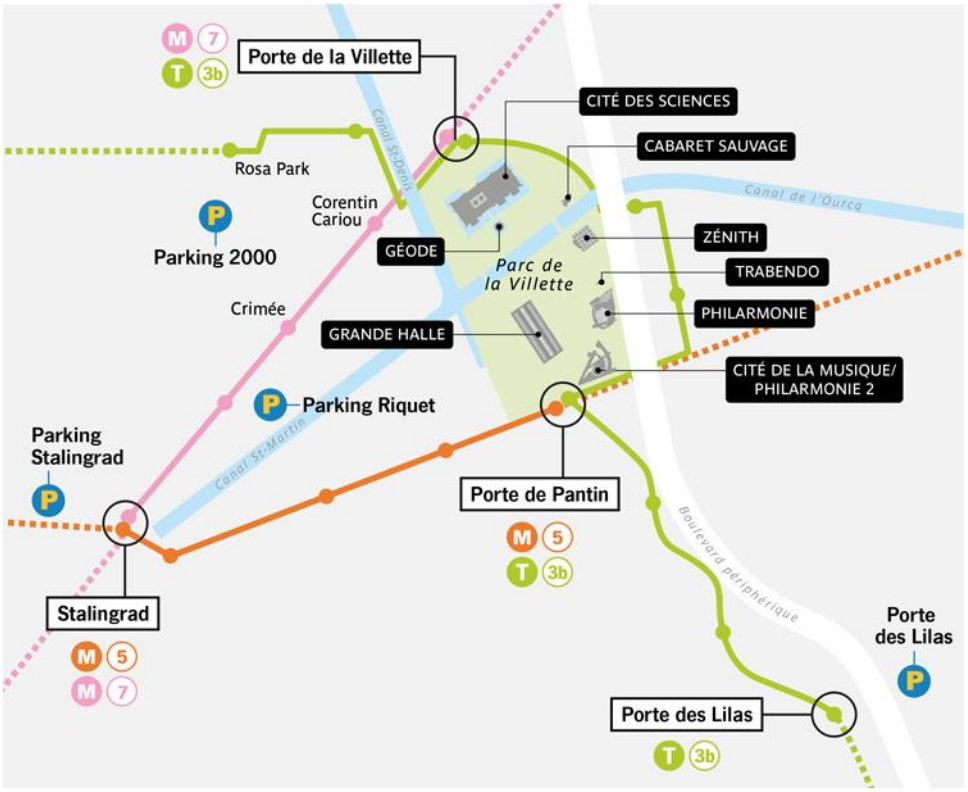
3.2 Deconstruction in Design: Where “Pragmatic Meaning” Is Contained in “Conceptual Meaning”

Parc de la Villette is a deconstructive project where Bernard Tschumi puts the theory of deconstruction into practice. Tschumi’s concept is firmly based on the idea that the design is neither an end nor a whole, but leaves an elastic space for the future practice of users to complete the meaning. The design offers a systematic plan for the site, conceptual and abstract, but “conceptual meaning” is not completed through the architect’s efforts alone; the inherent meaning comes from the actual practice of users, which is supposed to complete story in order for “conceptual meaning” to be fully interpreted. Therefore, in this project, although it has great conceptual concern, “pragmatic meaning” is contained within “conceptual meaning”, parasitising the concept, and serves as a necessity which enables the concept to be accomplished. “Pragmatic meaning” is varied and transforming all the time, as the events happening on the site are transient. “Pragmatic meaning” is endlessly produced and re-produced on the site; it is always different, and different meanings disagree with each other, so that the emergence of a fixed meaning of the space is always postponed. In this way, “conceptual meaning” is constantly interpreted and reinterpreted as “pragmatic meaning” is constantly iterated in the space, enriching and evolving over time, without reaching any boundary or ending.

3.2.1 Design concept

The competition for the Parc de la Villette was arranged by the French government in 1982. As one of the “Grand Projects”, along with the Opéra at Bastille and the Grande Arch at La Défense,

the objectives were to mark the scope of a new era, and economic and cultural development in Paris. The brief proposed a 21st-century urban park encompassing multiple cultural facilities, such as an open-air theatre, music centres, workshops and cultural gardens. Parc de la Villette is located on a large site in the northeast corner of Paris, a 125-acre expanse, between two metro stations.[243] Over 1 kilometre long in one direction and 700 metres in width, the site for Parc de la Villette was at a complicated location, as a complex of former slaughterhouses that served Paris and the surrounding regions still covered the site, thus giving the project an unusual back story.[244] These abandoned buildings on the site were surrounded by railway lines and a major city ring road, and the site was intersected by an industrial-period canal through its centre. So when architects came to this project, on the one hand they were expected to propose new strategies for an urban park in the new era, and on the other hand they had to concern themselves with how to deal with the existing architectural elements in any new scheme.



[243] Bernard Tschumi (1987), *Cinégram folie: le Parc de la Villette*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, p. ii.

[244] Tschumi, *Architecture Concepts*, p. 114.

Figure 35. Key buildings on the site of Parc de la Villette and transport links.

In 1983, Bernard Tschumi's scheme was selected from those submitted by 470 teams from 70 countries. His winning scheme proposed a new urbanistic strategy by borrowing deconstruction as a design philosophy, and articulating concepts of superimposition, disjunction, différance and cinematic narrative. With a strong conceptual framework, Parc de la Villette, built between 1982 and 1988, is considered to be a built theory as well as a theoretical building, organised without any reference to the traditional rules of composition, hierarchy and orders.[245] This is the first built work to explore the concept of disjunction and superimposition under deconstructive notions. As Tschumi claims, this practice is a move from "pure mathematics" to "applied mathematics", since la Villette was built for the sake of applying the deconstructive method to architectural practice as an extension of the theoretical argument in *The Manhattan Transcripts*. The ambition of the project, as Tschumi clarifies, was in opposition to functionalist, formalist, classical and modernist doctrines, seeking instead to deconstruct architectural norms of totalising synthesis and reconstruct architecture along different axes with a concern for the disjunctive relation of events, spaces and movements as a major component.[246] The abstraction of the intellectual concept was combined with and completed by the pragmatics of actual experience. First, the discussion below will focus on how the concept was formulated, before moving to consider the "pragmatic meaning" of the space.

As Tschumi says, Parc de la Villette is not a green space but the largest discontinuous building ever constructed in the world. Tschumi set out his strategies for Parc de la Villette from an intention to approach the design of the park as architecture. The park was supposed to be a masterly construction, an inspired architectural gesture. Tschumi rejected making Parc de la Villette a composition in harmony with the Villette district, evoking nostalgia for the preceeding urban context. He preferred to create a park with its own autonomous identity.

[245] Bernard Tschumi (1988), "Parc de la Villette, Paris", in Papadakēs, A. (ed.), *Deconstruction in Architecture*, London: Architectural Design, pp. 33–39, pp. 35, 38.

[246] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p.186.

Moreover, he also rejected the expression of some pre-existing forms of architecture. As a deconstructive project, Parc de la Villette sought out substitutions. The aim was to search for and to produce a complement in the margin, to fill the gap left by what was already there. It was also to deconstruct what already existed by critically analysing the historical context and adding new layers that could exist independently, without centre and hierarchy. The project was intended to act as a mediator, between the site, programmes and theoretical concepts.[247]

The programmes at Parc de la Villette are complex. When the park was in the planning stages, at the north end of the site the huge steel carcass of the slaughterhouse left from the 1950s was already being transformed into a museum of science and technology.[248] Another abandoned cast iron and glass building to the south was also going to be transformed into the Grande Halle de la Villette, a cultural centre. There was also a music venue (Le Zenith) for rock concerts and other venues of music entertainment in the eastern part of the site (Philarmonie de Paris, Le Trabendo and Cabaret Sauvage). The new park was intended to have several workshops, a gymnasium and facilities, playgrounds, and places for exhibitions, concerts, scientific experiments, games and competitions. All of these intended programmes could have been arranged in one building complex, but Tschumi saw the whole parkland as an open-air cultural centre, within which all of these programmes would be separated into different buildings and scattered throughout the space like fragments exploded from an entirety.

Besides these planned programmes, Tschumi place a great deal of focus on a non-programmatic strategy – that is, there was no established cause-and-effect relationship between programme and architecture.[249] In the modernist period, form acted as an interpreter of hierarchy and symbolic meaning, through the unity of its parts and transparent trace from object to meaning. There were one-to-one correspondences between form and function, style and use, context and programme, space and action, object and meaning, which

[247] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 68.

[248] Bernard Tschumi, Frédéric Migayrou & Centre Georges Pompidou (2014), *Bernard Tschumi: Architecture: Concept & Notation*, Paris: Centre Pompidou, p. 121.

[249] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 69.

might originate in the correlation between signifier and signified. What gave rise to those values was a belief in a unified, centred, self-generative subject – an architectural form of self-sufficient and self-evident matter.[250] In contrast, associated with deconstruction, Tschumi finds more pleasure in what he calls "concept-form". The concept-form is an abstract configuration that can be built in a particular place and welcomes its culture to be accepted and accommodated in the form. The concept can be programmatic, social, technological and so on, but the form must be relative abstract, since these programmatic, social or technological aspects are indeterminate and possibly in constant mutation.[251] The form hence is not necessary to be bounded with a particular intention, whereas it has to be highly adaptive to multiple situations. Therefore, the concept-form requires "a high level of abstraction in orchestrating together a complexity that includes materials, movement and programmes in the definition of architectural form".[252] This notion of concept-form suggests a disjunction in those one-to-one correlations derived from modernism, attempts to decentre the notions of architectural forms of synthesis or totality with inherent meanings, and rejects the well-defined signified which was meant to guarantee the authenticity of architecture. Instead it is in favour of a superposition or juxtaposition of the "cause" and the "effect," and programmes and forms are considered to be independent, both crucial and equal to each other. In addition, a concept-form should not be seen to be relevant with a typological form, as the concept-form has no priori meaning attached to it, and it does not originate in historical conventions.[253]

So, from the deconstruction's point of view, architectural meaning does not come straightforwardly from architectural forms. It could come from the traces of an event or programme – namely, actual experience in the spaces, which has not been predetermined by and does not immanently exist in architectural forms. Thus, programmes are generated according to users; thereby, meanings are transiently produced and re-produced over time

[250] Tschumi, "Parc de la Villette, Paris", p. 33.

[251] Bernard Tschumi (2010), *Event-Cities 4: Concept-form*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 14.

[252] Michael Costanzo & Liugi Prestinenza Puglisi (2009), "Twenty Years After (Deconstructivism): An Interview with Bernard Tschumi", *Architectural Design*, vol. 79 (1), pp. 24–29, p. 26.

[253] Tschumi, *Event-Cities 4*, p. 15.

and varied between individuals. As a result, architecture is a neutral object, and architectural spaces are considerably compatible, as heterogeneous programmes can happen in one place, randomly and unexpectedly, on different occasions. By these means, as Tschumi rejected the idea that meanings are immanent in building forms with direct capacity for signifying, he subverted functionalism's utopia in which form follows function and rejected logocentrism's insistence that meanings are immanent in words.[254] However, Tschumi's geometric system of architecture actually means nothing, as he intended to offer pure architectural forms without any semantic reference, paralleling Derrida's rejection of the fixed relationship between well-defined meanings and their linked signifiers. They both insist that no meaning inherently exists in objects, or any other materials, but that meanings are always socially produced in practice. To Derrida, words such as "park", "architecture" or "science" had lost their inherent meanings; to Tschumi, the buildings or any constructions in the park had also lost their fixed meanings, just as signifiers had lost their signifieds. The meanings produced in buildings would be constantly "différance" – different, deferring and disagreeing, without beginnings and ends, but constantly forming and iterating over time. So at the conceptual level, an object (or concept) leaves room for pragmatic experience to complete the "conceptual meaning". Programmes are an integral part of architecture. Architectural elements have no absolute "truth". Architecture only functions when it encounters the movements of bodies. For example, the red folies in la Villette have no "true" meaning by themselves: their meanings are deferred, to be aroused through activities such as street arts, small parties, live shows or sport games actually taking place in their spaces. Therefore, the concept is also being deferred, to be achieved when "pragmatic meanings" have emerged in the spaces in later experience. This gives rise to a multiplicity of programmes. Each individual can project his own programme onto, and has his unique interpretations of, a space. Architecture becomes a carnival of interpretations. Only when events and programmes have already happened in spaces can the "pragmatic meaning" be produced in architecture, and "conceptual meaning" will then be fulfilled. Therefore, Tschumi's concept of disjunction works as a theoretical tool for the

[254] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 71.

generation of architectural meaning in both conceptual and pragmatic terms.

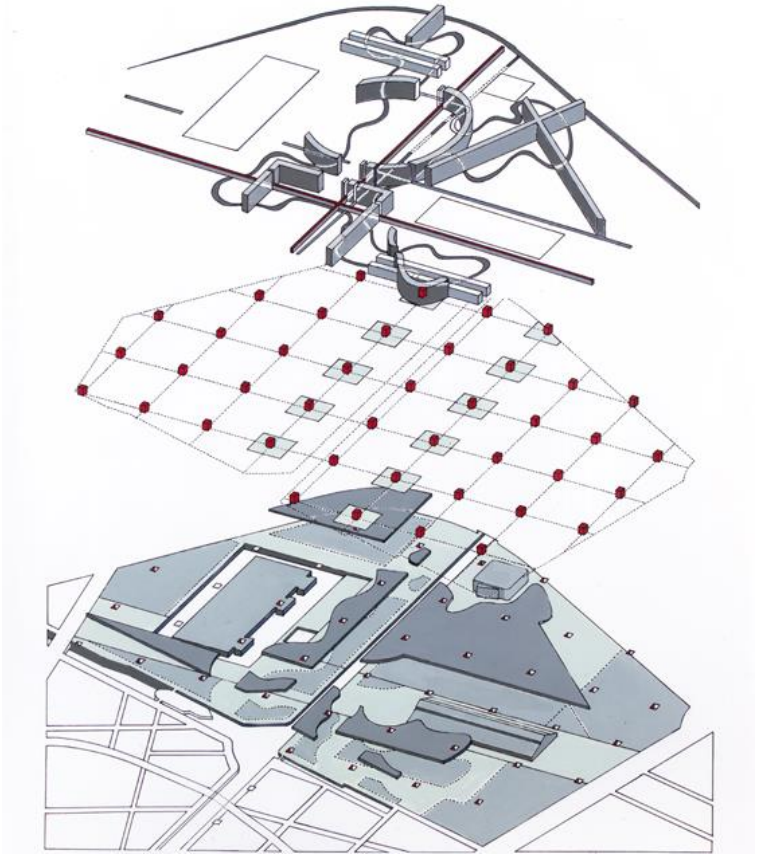


Figure 36. Three systems of lines, points and surfaces of Parc de la Villette at the conceptual level.

Tschumi ignored the context and subverted any notion of boundary on this site. Without concern for context and boundary, Parc de la Villette is arranged as a quite autonomous systematic anti-contextual complex and no relation to its surroundings.[255] Three systems are superimposed on the same ground layer by layer, a system of points, lines and surfaces. These three systems are distinct in geometrical formation and also in programmatic configuration. The system of points contains point-like programmed and un-programmed activities; the system of lines directs the movements of people through the park, thus containing linear and curvilinear activities; and the system of surfaces contains series of un-programmed activities that can be appropriated by the public in unexpected ways. The surfaces are supposed to host

[255] Tschumi, "Parc de la Villette, Paris", p. 38.

larger-scale surface activities, from an open-air cinema to informal football games.[256] The concept of three superimposed systems offers not only a way of arranging geometrical systems but, more significantly, a way of combining different events, both programmatic and un-programmatic. Whether or not those programmatic events imagined at the conceptual level are realised and "conceptual meaning" is completed depends on whether or not "pragmatic meaning" is generated through actual experience on the site.

Though one system is superimposed on another, they retain their own internal logic and are distinct from each other, they resist any dominant or foreign elements, and are supposed to contaminate but not negate one another. Each of them represents a distinctive and autonomous whole, hence it is impossible for them to be combined and play a part in a bigger composition. Therefore, the superimposition of the three systems never produces a coherent mega-structure.[257] It is apparent that in Parc de la Villette the architecture is seen not as the result of composition, or as a synthesis of functional concerns, but rather as a complex process of an ever-changing relationship between events, spaces and movements. As opposed to the more traditional play between function and form or use and style, in Parc de la Villette the architecture is a pure matter waiting for the permutations of programmes, and a combination of a large set of variables constantly resetting with time.[258] The principle of superimposition of the three autonomous systems presents a rejection of totalising synthesis. Additionally, the principle of heterogeneity is applied in spatial structures, by disrupting the coherence of the three systems, promoting the instability of the overall structure, encouraging conflict over synthesis and fragmentation over unity; the park thus avoids being homogenised into a totality.[259]

The system of points is made up of bright red cubes. Tschumi called them "folies", meaning madness and passion. Those folies are the most striking features on the site, organised in a

[256] Tschumi, Migayrou & Pompidou, *Bernard Tschumi: Architecture*, p. 109.

[257] Tschumi, "Parc de la Villette, Paris", p. 38.

[258] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 181.

[259] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 70.

self-referential grid, placed every 120 metres at the vertices of a Cartesian grid.[260] Each of the folies started as a 10 m cube, and was divided three by three by three into 27 small cubes. These three-storey constructions of neutral spaces can be elaborated and transformed according to specific programmatic needs. Whenever the cubes are given particular presentations, with solid walls, curtain walls, hollowed out, or combined with trellises or cylinders, these red folies are designed to have their own characteristics. Each of them is made up of several different parts which can be assembled and disassembled in a variety of configurations depending on their individual programmes.[261] Some cubes have metal plates filling all exposed sides, thus looking like solid boxes; some are semi-solid with movement vectors such as ramps or staircases attached on one side; and some cubes are combined with sculptures or installations, such as a water wheel.[262] The grid of points allows almost all of what is already on the site to be retained, especially the 19th-century buildings. The small structures juxtapose with the remains of old buildings rather than invading them. For example, when the grid of folies comes across the remains of a 19th-century building, the whole folie cannot be built at that location, but a red frame is designed paralleling the building remains, highlighting its own presence as well as respecting the presence of the old building. Therefore, as Tschumi stresses, the folies are elaborated through the methods of normality and deviation, since they try to be uniform, in line with one grid and with the same structural matrix, but at the meantime they tend towards heterogeneity and dissociation, thus involving both rationality and irrationality.

[260] Harry F. Mallgrave (2011), *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the Present*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 138.

[261] Tschumi, Migayrou & Pompidou, *Bernard Tschumi: Architecture*, p. 126.

[262] Glusberg, *Deconstruction*, p. 71.

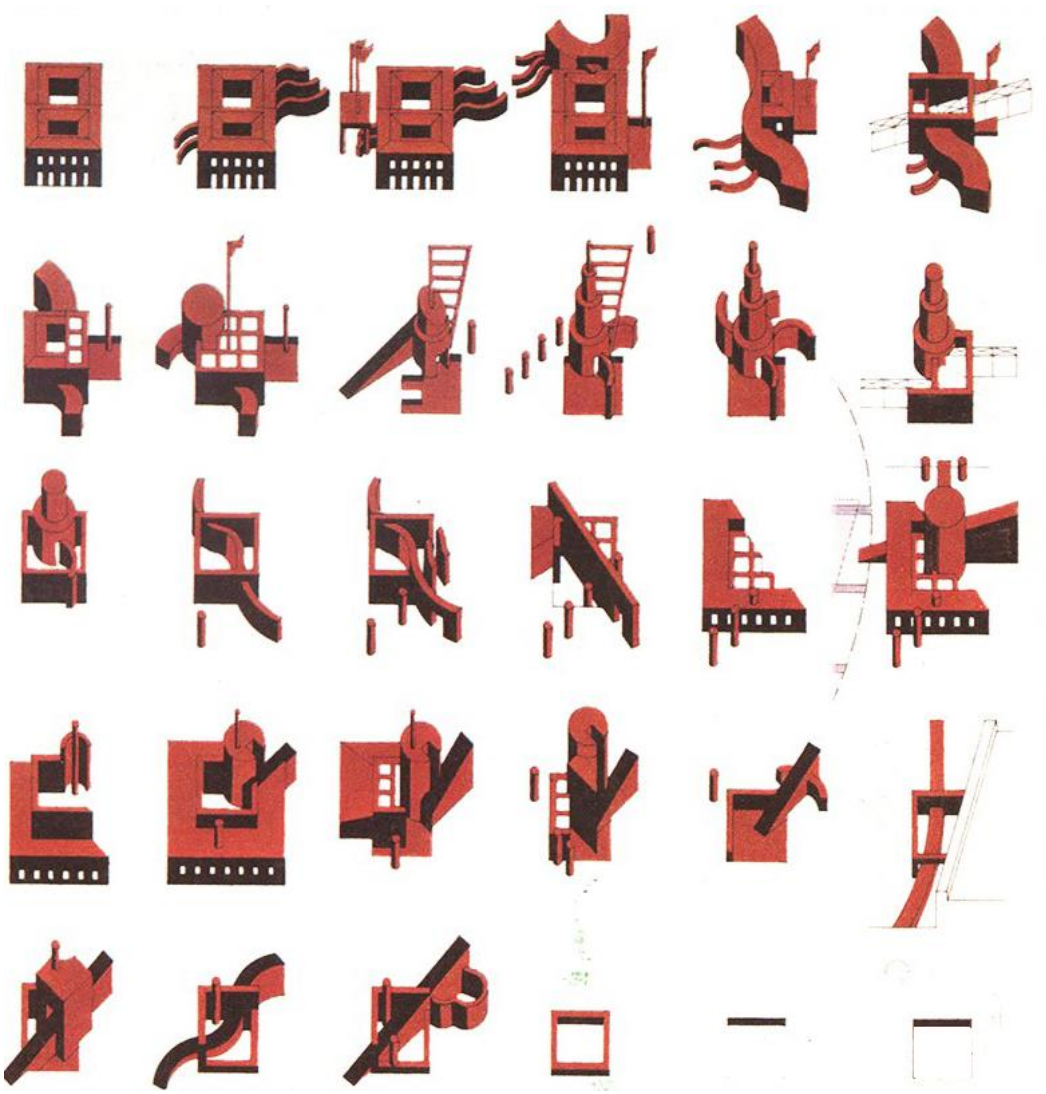


Figure 37. Conceptual design of neutral red folies on the system of points.

This organisational concept allows the massive programme devised by committees to be broken down into smaller components rather than being concentrated in one building complex. Some cubes are able to house some planned programmes, such as exhibition galleries, bars, restaurants, workshops, offices, cinemas, a first-aid centre and an information centre, as if the programmatic needs have been exploded into a series of fragments. Some cubes stay as pure architectural structures calling for “pragmatic meaning” to be attached. Each folly constitutes an autonomous sign which indicates its independent programmatic concerns. Therefore, these folies are the nodes of programmes, the points of intensity, as they are the focus of dissociated spaces, acting as anchoring points accommodating the relations between objects, events and

people.[263] Thus, this system is a layer of multi-referential anchoring points encouraging people to interact in order to bring "pragmatic meaning" to the spaces, hence it challenges the institutional structure of buildings, urban parks or any other leisure and cultural centres.

The lines are formed by the linear pathways running between the folies and curvilinear pathways randomly weaving around folies and thematic gardens. An orthogonal system with wide and straight pedestrian routes on the site marks the site with a coordinate cross. The north–south pedestrian route links two main park gates and two metro stations by each gate, while the east–west pedestrian route – the paths on the north and south banks of the canal – connects Paris to its suburbs. A 5-metre-wide open weaving cover-structure runs all the way over these two orthogonal pedestrian routes, which to some degree offers a strong sense of direction, stressing their leading role among all paths. Besides these coordinate-like linear pathways, there are also other straight lines, such as the one spreading from northwest to southeast across the width of the park linking a series of paths, and a shorter one going northeast to southeast connecting the former pedestrian route to the south entrance. The system of lines also includes curvilinear paths going through thematic gardens. These paths cover most parts of the park, although seemingly random, yet they carefully constitute a well-organised circuit. Thematic gardens are located all over the park along the curvilinear circuit. The paths of thematic gardens intersect with linear paths at various places in order to link all key activities, and this linkage is accessorised by alleys connecting curvilinear paths with activity areas (on all systems of points, lines and surfaces). When people enter the thematic gardens, they might feel as if they are entering a dense and green microclimate, which would be an experience different from that of the rest of the park, thus the "pragmatic meaning" produced in thematic gardens is different from that of other parts of the park. In addition, for linear pedestrian routes the paving stones and pavement are laid out in rough and smooth bands which provide distinct expressions to movement separation. This separation implies and directs "pragmatic meaning", as smooth pavements is intended for bikes while walkers are

[263] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 178.

able to use both the rough and the smooth zones.[264]

The system of surfaces is the bottom layer underneath the systems of points and lines. It contains multiple functional grounds laid over the site. On the conceptual level, the surface system includes four areas of surfaces along the west side of the north–south pedestrian route, and a smaller area located at the back of the fourth of these; there is also a linear area north of the east–west pedestrian route, with a tiny area east of it, one area (the largest) south of the east–west route, and one triangular area on the northeast corner of the site. These big areas include lawns, playgrounds and gardens. There is no programmed activity on the surfaces. They all play host to any unexpected activities requiring large expanses of space for play, games, exercises and mass entertainments. “Pragmatic meaning” is then iteratively produced in the surface system through large-scale activities.

Therefore, the idea of deconstruction in the park can be understood in three dimensions. The first dimension is the geometric, presented by the separation and superimposition of three autonomous layers of points, lines and surfaces. The second is the programmatic dimension, presented by the disjunctive relationship between form and function, space and action, object and meaning. The last dimension is an extension of the second, in the non-correspondence between signified and signifier. Architectural space itself is a signifier without any signified, while the meaning of the space is produced through actual programmes, events and activities happening within the space. As programmes transform over time, the meanings of the architecture are constantly changing, so that the architecture is structured through ever-evolving programmatic images, performed like filmic scenes.

This filmic analogy is not only expressed in single buildings, the system of points, but, as Tschumi describes, the linear system of the park also acts as narrative paths made out of segments like film frames. A “frame” means each of the segments of a sequence. Each frame is placed in a continuous movement. Successive frames constitute a sequence of film. The sequence of the film can be slow, fast or accelerated, as one moves along a path at varying

[264] Tschumi, Migayrou & Pompidou, *Bernard Tschumi: Architecture*, p. 136.

speed.[265] The images of the film change with the movement of one's body, from gardens to playground, from fields to folies. One can design one's own film as one moves through the park and searches for ways to frame segments of images. Hence, the park becomes a narrative.

Tschumi's filmic idea in the design of Pard de la Villette is in some way engaged with traditional Chinese gardening philosophy, namely, scenes change with the movement of the body. Gardens are spaces of pleasure for the body's wandering. Individual bodies could find different ways of scenes, that is, different journeys in the garden. One can have different journeys at different times when one encounters the garden. The body's pleasure leads to the pleasure of the mind – body and mind are integrated and inter-affected. Usually traditional gardens (Jiangnan private gardens) are small, but it could offer unlimited pleasure, and makes the body feels like it is at a forest – this is the very point of gardening philosophy, creating the "aesthetic sense" of "small forest". One of the essential techniques to achieve this feeling is to make more scenes and scenes-change within the limited space, in order for the body to have richer experience and more pleasure as it moves through the space, thus having the sense of staying at a forest. This gardening philosophy is considerably applied in a contemporary project, the design of Xiangshan Campus, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Similar to the design of traditional Chinese gardens, Tschumi has the idea of scenes-change in the design of Parc de la Villette. One creates one's own journey as one wanders in the park. What one sees and experiences accidentally happen on one's way and this is where the pleasure comes from. The architect could neither design the exact ways one has to walk on nor exact experience one would go through, it is users who direct their own films following bodies' movement.

The cinematic promenade is the key feature of the park, where the sequences of events, activities and incidents are inevitably superimposed on the fixed spatial sequences. Architecture produces a distance between physical forms and the programmes it encompasses. The elements of architectural forms in different layers are free from their historical connotations, the fixed signifieds. They have been put into a broader, more flexible and plainer plane, waiting for unimagined activities to occur, ready to receive new meanings and to be

[265] Ibid.

framed into films.

3.2.2 Everyday life in Parc de la Villette

According to the above, the concept of Parc de la Villette has defined a new type of urban park, as it proposed an innovation in programme organisation, which drew heavily on ideas from films, linguistics and deconstructive philosophy. Parc de la Villette is basically about establishing an opposition to the context of both time and space – to what currently exists in that period and in the surroundings. Generally, there are three issues Tschumi is interested in: first, juxtaposition, superimposition and the fragmentation of the three autonomous systems – in both physical spaces and experiential programmes; second, the filmic representation of disjunctive terms of spaces, events and movements comes directly from *The Manhattan Transcripts*; third, the belief in différance of architectural meaning that is seen as constantly developing over time and negates fixed relations between signifiers and signifieds. All of the methods of superimposition, disjunction and différance are employed, with the intention of making the totalising composition of the self-contained architecture impossible.

Tschumi offers a strong conceptual framework, wherein “pragmatic meaning” is considered as a part of the concept. The concept has arranged a physical structure of programmes containing three systems, so that the project is generated through top-down imposition of conceptual aesthetics. However, this abstraction of the intellectual concept needs pragmatic experience to be combined with it in order for the concept to be realised. So observation of actual activities on the site is necessary in order to explore “pragmatic meaning” on the site, as well as to understand the whole meaning of the concept.

After the physical space had been constructed, Parc de la Villette became the container of potential events, programmes and activities. It welcomes people to engage with the spaces, thus bodies and spaces become mutually violating, irrationality and rationality interact, and immediate experience and the design concept are combined; therefore, Tschumi’s definition of the ultimate pleasure of architecture becomes approachable, and “pragmatic meaning” emerges in the spaces.

Derrida commented on Tschumi's work in 1986 in an exhibition on la Villette. He denied that the deconstructive meaning of Parc de la Villette led "back to the desert of an architecture" which was "without finality, aesthetic aura, fundamentals … inhuman, useless, uninhabitable and meaningless"; in fact, those structures on the site maintained, renewed, re-inscribed and revived architecture.[266] Hence, the life span of Parc de la Villette would be longer than that of architecture with fixed meaning, and thus the architectural meaning of Parc de la Villette could stay young and vigorous over a longer period.

Therefore, in order to discover "pragmatic meaning" and have a full interpretation of "conceptual meaning", investigations of the actual use of the spaces on the site has been carried out. Just as everybody seeks their own way in this programmatic structure, I also sought to find a route for investigation. The route I chose was the curvilinear pathway of the movement system. While walking on this route, events happening on the three systems were instantly mapped on different individual maps respectively. Site observations and mapping work was undertaken in summer 2015 over two weeks on weekdays and at weekends, in different weather conditions – cloudy, sunny, windy and rainy. It was not intended to be a scientific investigation or to produce a precise programmatic map of Parc de la Villette – after all, activities happening in the park could not be accurately counted, as they are too flexible and changeable. So, since the park had been devised as a place filled with and signified by incidentals, the observer who violated the spaces was also an incidental looking for other incidentals. When I was following my planned incidental way on a certain incidental date in certain incidental weather, it was interesting to see what events were caught incidentally. Events caught were first mapped respectively on individual maps of points, lines and surfaces; when these individual maps are brought together, the way in which irrelative events are seemingly compatible is revealed more dramatically than when the maps are looked at separately. In effect, Tschumi devised a drama stage for the public, but the scripts are left for public to write, and the shows are directed and performed by the people who participate in the park as actors. Therefore, everybody is acting in a self-written, self-directed and self-

[266] Mallgrave, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory*, p. 140.

performed play in Parc de la Villette, while everybody is also a part of the audience watching dramas performed by others.

As events were caught, mapped and superimposed on the same map, Tschumi's logic of superimposition of three systems has been followed and reflected in the pragmatic method of study. Events were mapped over a period, and have been superimposed and analysed, so that the "pragmatic meaning" of the spaces has been gradually discovered over a vertical time axis. The "pragmatic meaning" produced in spaces is therefore incidental. It seems that it is hardly possible for "pragmatic meaning" to be pictured completely, as it can only be caught partially and coincidentally, revealing only a segment of the whole. But nobody knows what the whole looks like and how to predictably get a certain expected segment from it: what can be caught is only an incidental part from a never-completed indefinite picture. Events are constantly changing and transiently exist in the spaces. The "pragmatic meaning" that grows in the spaces can vanish in a flash, thus it is hard to have an accurate plan and gain even a segment of "pragmatic meaning". As a result, the examples of "pragmatic meaning" obtained from site investigations are merely small fragments from a total meaning which is permanently developing and transforming through time, and the overall "pragmatic meaning" gained from the investigation is a combination of these fragments. These fragments which are organised in an attempt to interpret "pragmatic meaning" are in a chaos of logic, since each individual plays a part in his/her drama without any central guidance; thereby, the fragments of meaning are freely produced, combined and disappearing out of control. Though "pragmatic meaning" is incidental and logically chaotic, it is ceaselessly iterative. This is a "vertical" iteration proceeding over time, as events are continuously happening in and vanishing unexpectedly from the different spaces of the site, upon which "pragmatic meaning" is constantly created, transformed and replaced. Moreover, in this case "conceptual meaning" is interpreted incidentally as well, since the "pragmatic meaning" which is involved in and accomplishes "conceptual meaning" is variable. Hence, when the spaces have already been in actual use, the concept will not be an intellectual abstraction any more, but will be enriched and will vary as "pragmatic meaning" vertically iterates. "Conceptual meaning" is then interpreted and re-interpreted by ever-changing events, so that it is continuously fulfilled and re-fulfilled.

“Conceptual meaning” is not any more seen as a lifeless and empty rhetoric: it is alive. What Tschumi did was simply to form a frame of meaningless spaces based on a general categorisation of three main activity types. When “pragmatic meaning” emerges in these spaces, “conceptual meaning” becomes animated. It moves from being a rhetorical term with grand, constant ambitions to being an elastic, living body carefully adjusting with the change of “pragmatic meaning”. The liveliness of Parc de la Villette consequently becomes a combination of “conceptual meaning” and “pragmatic meaning”, where “conceptual meaning” contains “pragmatic meaning” while “pragmatic meaning” animates “conceptual meaning”, and the ultimate pleasure of architecture which Tschumi proposed – the junction of concept and immediate experience – is realised as the result of the combination of the two kinds of meaning.

- Point-like events

Figure 38. System of points: programmed and unprogrammed folies.

Figure 39. Events incidentally observed on the system of points.

When walking close to the main entrances, the red structures standing near the gates will inform the passer-by of the presence of Parc de la Villette. Just as Tschumi expected, the red folies are the most visible structure on the site, giving the park identifiable images. The repetitive appearance of the red structures surprises constantly as one is moving around the site, since they are not exactly alike – they are distinct and creative, and always unexpectedly appear in front of one's eyes. Wandering in the park, the three overlapping systems of points, lines and surfaces are not as easily noticed as they are in the conceptual diagram. What can be easily perceived is the well-organised system of red folies. It can be sensed in the park that

these folies are in some repetitive order, but it is not as explicit that they are in an organised grid as it is in the conceptual diagram. Only those folies that are located along the two linear pedestrian routes and make a distinct cross on the site present a strong sense of the dot-array, while the rest of the folies do not have such a recognisable sense that they are placed in a grid. Moreover, it seems impossible to realise that the repetitive red folies are in some state of dissociation through the process of explosion from a mega-totality, as is explained on the conceptual level, because it is difficult to imagine that they are in the form of separation from an abstract matrix when looking at them from a phenomenological perspective instead of as conceptual drawings. When in the park, the abstract sense of design philosophy Tschumi created is not much associated with the liveliness of the actual places, even though those activities happening in the park are what Tschumi anticipated. There is an impressive dialogue between steel structures and landscape settings, such as canal, lawn and gardens. It seems they are conflicting as they are in different materials, but at the same time they homogeneously co-exist within the same ground. The red folies seem radical, but they create a peaceful and vibrant picture with the involvement of the green ground and the events happening around them.

The follies were originally arranged based on Cartesian coordinates; however, in fact it was found that not all of the folies were properly presented. Nearly one third of the planned cubes have been displaced or are missing compared with the original scheme. The actually presented folies are still arrayed in the expected order. There are altogether 26 red cubes, including three frame structures adhering to existing buildings. They are organised in a grid of five columns and nine rows, in which columns are named J, L, N, P and R, from the west to the east, and the rows are numbered with Arabic numerals from 1 to 10, starting from the north. The name of each folie is made up of its column name combined with its row number, such as L2 and P7. So in this way the folies are easily distinguished from each other by their unique names. Wherever one comes across a folie in the park, one can be aware of one's position according to its name. Therefore, the elaborately arrayed folies and their accurate names give the park a sense of orientation and also mean to emphasise the systematicness of the layer of points.

In the layer of points, each folie contains programmed or un-programmed events. Some folies

function to meet the requirements of the project brief, which intended there to be appointed services in the park, such as workshops and a museum. As stated before, Tschumi put those programmes in some of the folies, and thus they are scattered over the park instead of concentrated in one building complex. There are 14 folies out of 26 having fixed programmes, of which there are three workshops (L5, P5, N6), a restaurant (L2), an exhibition gallery (L7), a submarine museum (l'Argonaute) (P4), a television studio (N5), a children's playground reception (L6), a music venue (R6), a first-aid centre (N7), a cafe (P7), two offices (R7, P8) and an information centre (L9). There are two folies working as walkway exchangers, R5 and J5. R5 has three levels of walkway intersecting – the bridge over the canal, the east–west elevated gallery along the canal and the ground level. J5, serving as the west entrance, links the lower park area, the east–west elevated gallery along the canal and the ground level. These two walkway exchangers also serve as un-programmed activity points, as people were occasionally found resting and rambling over them. Besides this, some folies house electricity equipment, such as L3, L7 and P6. Some workshop folies are not usually open, including the first-aid centre and exhibition spaces. But some public services are used heavily, especially those along the north–south linear pedestrian route and l'Argonaute museum, as well as the information centre and the cafe.

Figure 40. The folie (P8) has been used as an office.

Figure 41. The folie (L9) has been used as an information centre at the south entrance.

Figure 42. The closed first-aid centre (N7).

Besides the four frame-like folies which are attached to existing buildings (N1, N8, N9, L8), there are eight folies which are completely un-programmed – empty, flexible and fully available for the public. There are also partly un-programmed folies, such as R7, which has an office upstairs, leaving free space for the public downstairs, and P5, which has a workshop downstairs accessible from ground level and a public free space upstairs accessible from a bridge corridor. However, some of the un-programmed spaces are partly locked for some reason, like N4 and P5.

As the investigation of incidentals was being carried out when I was walking along the curvilinear pathways on the system of lines, some spontaneous events were caught, happening in different folies on different days and in different weather. L1 serves as the landmark presenting the entrance of the park. It was identified several times people were using L1 individually as a pavilion for short rests. They stayed there alone for 10–15 minutes and then continued on their journeys again. Some continued their journeys towards the park, while some moved towards the Avenue. So, to people who used the space, L1 functioned much like a transition terrace, a node of time and space connecting the previous and the next journey.

Figure 43. The folie (L1) acts as a pavilion for short rests.

N1 is an interesting structure with a spiral staircase going from the ground floor to the upstairs, and an upper-level terrace linked to an existing concrete building. As was observed, two or three people occasionally gathered on the upper floor, chatting and having their lunch, while sometimes children treated the spiral stairs as a big toy that they found enjoyable as they were crawling up and down them. Therefore, in this case, N1 meant different things to adults from what it meant to children. The “pragmatic meaning” adults produced for N1 was of a small-scale semi-private area for taking a rest with friends, but the “pragmatic meaning” children produced was of something like an amusement machine that was able to bring them joy.

Figure 44. People are sitting on the upper level of the folie (N1).

P6 is a cubic structure accompanied by a large spiral ramp, starting from the ground floor and leading to the first level. It was observed on several occasions that the ramp was used by children as a cycling lane or a skateboard lane, since the sloping and wide conditions provided children much pleasure when they cycled or skated downwards from the upper end. In this case, the ramp becomes meaningful when children are playing on it. In addition, a group of hip-hop dancers once were found dancing inside the round space enclosed by the spiral ramp. Their live show attracted several people who went up on to the ramp to watch the performance. So in this situation the ramp became a watching stand and its curved shape effectively directed people's eyes towards the centre – the space surrounded by the ramp – which served as the perfect place for a live show. In addition, some people chose to go up to the upper level of the structure via the ramp, had a seat on the reticular floor and enjoyed a private time with a couple of friends. Therefore, as happened at N1, the different parts of the folly meant different things to different groups of people. And those different meanings could occur at the same time in different parts of a single folie.

Follies could sometimes become rain shelters; one day during an unexpected heavy storm,

several park visitors found that the folies were good places to shelter from the rain. And during the rain, the folies were seldom used for other purposes, so it seems that acting as a rain shelter was the most proper function they fulfilled in that situation. Hence, how a folie functions also depends on the weather conditions, in addition to the primary factor of the subjective intentions of users; that is to say, how “pragmatic meaning” transforms also depends on climatic factors.

There were three folies preferred by teenagers: L4, R4 and R7. Almost each time they were visited, groups of young people were found occupying these spaces. They were usually sitting in a circle or practising their skateboard skills. L4 has a raised stage semi-covered with red structures and an open-air public square in front of. It is located by one of the main pedestrian routes, at the bank where two canals intersect. Therefore, it offers space for teenagers’ exercises, an open view and good accessibility from the main path, and these are the reasons for its popularity. However, the other two folies popular with teenagers are not close to vibrant parts of the park but located at the corners where they are only accessible from curvilinear paths, away from the main flows. R4 is purely a frame structure in which a footstep goes through the middle of the ground floor. R7 is available at the ground level, with offices on the upper level above the gathering area. Teenagers preferred to take these places as a place to gather basically because they are separated from the crowds, and thus the young people could turn these places into their own realms, so that the sense of identity of those places would be built up. The “pragmatic meaning” of these three places preferred by teenagers is produced in the folies by those teenagers who would like to establish realms belonging to them alone, with those particular folies, either spacious or semi-private, offering appropriate spatial conditions to meet teenagers’ requirements.

- Linear and curvilinear events

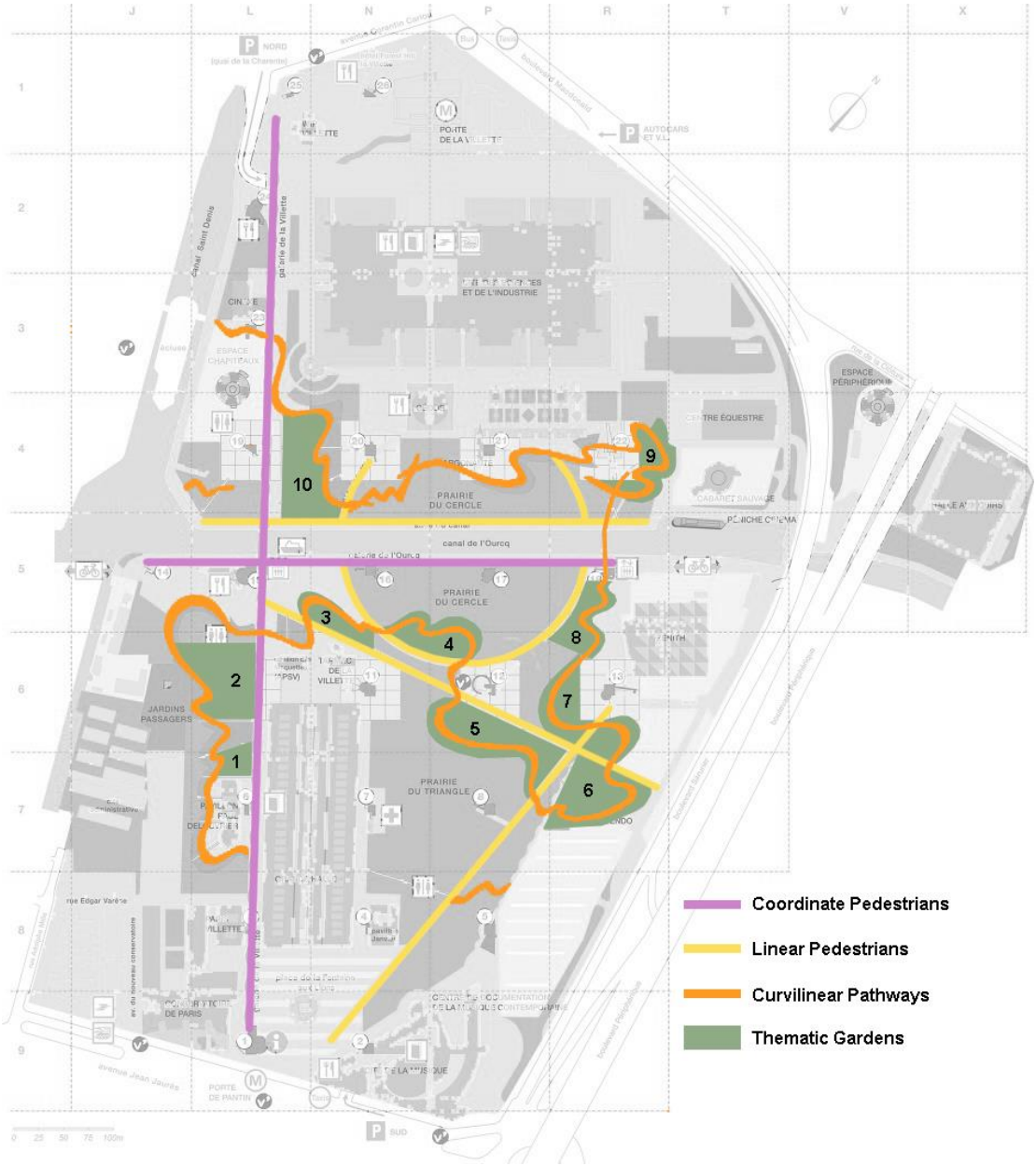


Figure 45. System of lines.

Figure 46. Events incidentally observed on the system of lines (pathways).

Figure 47. Events incidentally observed on the system of lines (thematic gardens).

On the system of lines, the north–south linear pedestrian route is the most heavily used pathway. Its width and its function of linking two main entrances and two metro stations pragmatically give it a distinct role. Its width, the identifiable characteristics of the weaving cover, and the repeatedly appearing folies with programmed and un-programmed activities along one side jointly maintain the importance of this path. Besides the main expected programme of walking movement directed by the path, numerous un-programmed incidental movements and events were occurring transiently on the path. Children were always found playing on their skates, skateboards and bicycles on the smoother pavement of the route. They

were either following their parents or with a group of other children. The barrier-free smooth pavement provides possibilities for children to translate the pedestrian path into a skating or bicycle lane. Casual football games occasionally happened on the rougher pavement; at the same time, other free exercise was taking place, such as running, cycling, badminton or sometimes just casual play between a couple of children on the wide pedestrian path.

Figure 48. North–south coordinated pathway.

Figure 49. Football on the rough pavement of the pedestrian coordinates.

Stationary activities also took place on the linear system originally designed for movement. People were found standing on the rough pavement in a circle, some with their dogs, chatting while enjoying the sunshine during good weather; some were found sitting on the pavement,

reading books or having sandwiches. There is a 40-cm-high partition set up between the rough and the smooth pavements all the way along the pedestrian route. Its height makes it possible for it to serve as a bench. So there were always people sitting on this partition, watching others passing by. However, in children's eyes, this partition could not only be used as a bench, but also as a walking bridge, since it gave them plenty of fun when they were walking on the top of the partition instead of the pavement. This concrete bench was also a practice place for guitar players. A couple of guitar players were observed gathering together, sitting on the partition, practising and conversing, heedless of passers-by who were interested in their playing.

This clearly shows that one place means different things to different individuals at the same time. It was common to see that a group of children skating by people who were having lunch on the partition, and sometimes two or three boys showing off their football skills in front of a girl sitting on the rough pavement. These different meanings emerged in the space and were compatibly mixed together. Moreover, the activities are quickly varied and transforming. For example, some people who were walking on the pavement might suddenly move to have rest on the partition, or a boy who was cycling along the pedestrian would choose to join a football game with another two boys, and after a while the three might find it would be more interesting to play with a dog held by its owner nearby. Therefore, the "pragmatic meaning" generated in the spaces is diverse and changeable, and anything new could happen at any time in the near future.

The pedestrian flow of the east–west linear pathway is not as heavy as that of the north–south linear pathway, although the east–west pathway consists of two levels, a ground-level pedestrian path and an elevated gallery along the canal. However, unexpected programmes were also found happening in this linear space: children were skating and skateboarding, people were cycling, some were walking their dogs, some were taking photos, some were standing and chatting by the side of the path, and some were sitting on the bank of the canal. Besides the lower flow rate, the main visible difference compared with the north–south path, it was also noticeable that the numbers of people who were running along the east–west path was considerably higher – there were almost no joggers found on the north–south path. This

shows that the wide and straight conditions of the pedestrian route, with a great park view, could serve as an ideal running space; however, high pedestrian flow would decrease the likelihood of a space being an ideal location for joggers. As a result, this difference between the two pedestrian routes implies that whether or not a particular activity will take place in a space depends on the pre-existing programmes in that space – the effects that the pre-existing programmes bring to that space – so that the effects created by other programmes become conditions of that space together with environmental and spatial conditions. The effects of existing programmes are considered by any new potential programmes. Running is a potential programme in the park and, by considering the existing conditions of each path, people chose the east–west linear path as the ideal place for this.

Another two more secluded linear pedestrian routes, starting from the west and the south of the park, spread diagonally across the park and intersect in the east part. Except for the west end of one of these routes, they usually remained quiet, and were thus much more private. The sense of linear space is stressed by two lines of trees standing by the sides of the paths, and these trees also help to create a more concealed space, therefore the sense of seclusion is reinforced. In these two relatively concealed linear pathways, far fewer passers-by were observed, but joggers were often found running through, along with other un-programmed events, such as children's cycling and skating.

Figure 50. Children cycling on the smooth pavement of the linear pedestrian path while people walking on the rough pavement.

The most commonly observed activity on the curvilinear paths was that of people sitting on benches. These people could be alone, in couples or in a group; some were sitting silently and some were chatting and having food together. These people were using the benches for their intended purpose, but other people were found lying on the benches having naps: they pragmatically created an extra meaning for the benches. Sports such as jogging and cycling which were frequently observed on linear paths were much less observed on curvilinear paths, but they could still be found occasionally at some places in good weather. The curved character of those paths makes places more private and secluded, so that they provide ideal places for dating couples. But the curves of the paths also make it more difficult for cyclists and joggers, except those people who specifically choose to cycle or run along zigzag and hilly paths. Some un-programmed stationary activities were also found on the curvilinear lines. Guitar players were once found sitting together on a bench, practising their music for their own enjoyment, without any passers-by walking around. Thus, the area they occupied resembled a private, open-air, live house. A bigger music/dance show was found on another curvilinear path, also for the purpose of self-enjoyment. More than ten people were involved in this music/dance show; some were playing instruments, while some were dancing, which attracted a number of passers-by to stay and watch. The small area immediately became an open-air performance stage in the woods.

Figure 51. Music/dance show on the curvilinear pathway.

Figure 52. Thematic garden 2: children's playground.

Figure 53. Thematic garden 10: children's playground.

Figure 54. Folk music show in garden 6.

Ten thematic gardens located along the curvilinear circuit present different identities. Three of them are children's playgrounds (2, 3, 10), of which garden 2 and garden 10 have amusement facilities carefully set up, while garden 3 only offers an area of flat and smooth ground, probably for children's sports which do not need accessory facilities. So garden 2 and garden 10 were always popular places where children of different ages were playing and sharing fun in the well-organised spaces. Children could also be found cycling and skating on the playground of garden 3, moving in circles around the edge of the ground or straight from one end to another. Sometimes also middle-aged women could be found learning traditional dance on the flat ground of this garden. Garden 8 has a series of exercise facilities where each time large numbers of young people were found doing exercises, and sometimes children were also found showing an interest in these facilities. Activities happening in gardens 2, 8 and 10 were fully programmed – children were acting to install meaning based on established programmes – while garden 3 was un-programmed, and it was children themselves who found out the possibility for it to serve as a playground for skating and cycling according to its conditions.

The rest of the gardens are not specifically programmed and all have their own distinctions. Events randomly take place in these gardens, thereby creating and transforming programmatic meaning, at times unexpectedly. For example, garden 5 is a sunken garden filled with bamboo.

One can see a thick bamboo grove when one is standing outside the garden, but one has to go down steps to reach the bottom of the garden, where one can feel an extraordinary sense of seclusion. But unfortunately nobody was found going down to the garden, probably because of the sense of insecurity, as the sunken garden was nearly invisible from the ground level of the park. Garden 6 is a grove with a number of stone benches set in an order. Usually this area was quiet – only a couple of lovers came here occasionally – but sometimes on sunny days it might become vibrant because of folk music groups. Once there were two folk music groups, each of them occupied at a corner; this attracted numbers of people to come and watch, and some even took part in dancing. As it became crowded, several stalls of folk products were set up. Folk decorations were on sale, accompanying the folk music, and hence a strong sense of folk culture was generated. Therefore, the garden temporarily transformed into a show stage as well as an open market, from which the meaning of the folk culture largely emerged in that place at that moment.

From the filmic point of view, each garden is like a frame. Each of these frames can become an individual piece of a film sequence. When people are walking along curvilinear paths, these gardens appear in front of them one by one with the movement of bodies, analogous to the playing of film frames. Frames can be arranged by mixing, combining and superimposing as bodies move along the paths. Bodies can choose specific narrative paths, film lengths and playing speed. As one moves along the paths, one might encounter various unexpected scenes, like music groups, dancing people, children cycling, dating lovers and so on. There are countless paths people can create and each of them, at different times, presents a unique film.

- Surface events

Figure 55. System of surfaces.

Figure 56. Events incidentally observed on the system of surfaces.

In the actual space the system of surfaces contains fewer areas than it was designed to contain at the conceptual level. There are three areas missing, while the remaining six pieces are still present and in actual use, but are modified in comparison to the conceptual design. Some of the areas designed to be involved in the system of surfaces have been taken into the system of lines as thematic gardens, some areas have been converted into concrete ground for other uses, and some are enclosed and inaccessible to the public; therefore the surfaces are either reduced in area or transformed in shape. But the surfaces that are present are still working as they were intended to.

The most popular areas are the two larger ones in the centre of the park as well as a smaller one at the corner where the two canals intersect. Plenty of activities were observed occurring on these surfaces, and thus these areas are usually vibrant and lively. There were always a great many people sitting or lying on the lawn, having picnics or just chatting in circles and sunbathing during sunny days. Dynamic activities were happening at the same time. Some people walked across the wide surface from one side to the other, so that the surface served as a path to them. However, far more people took surfaces as places to accommodate events of longer duration. Many people, including children, teenagers and adults, were playing football, badminton or tennis, running around, doing exercises, or engaging in other activities such as hip-hop dancing, guitar playing and singing, Kung-fu display, and other games like bubble blowing. These events coexisted on the same surface, so that meanings produced on one surface were multiple and compatible. Sometimes one activity interacted with another, for instance when people who were sunbathing became the audience for a Kung-fu display.

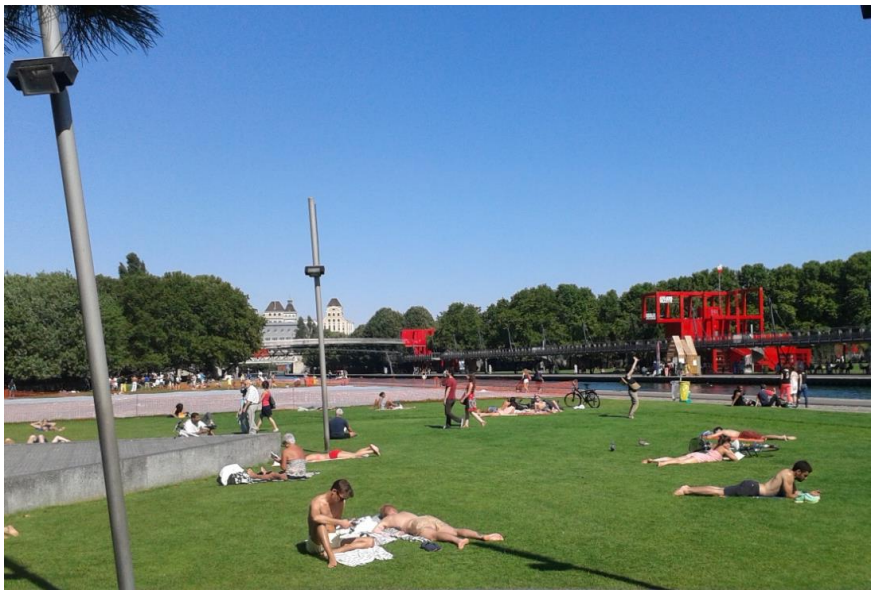


Figure 57. Sunbathing on the surface in the centre of the park.

Figure 58. Kung-fu display on the surface in the centre of the park.

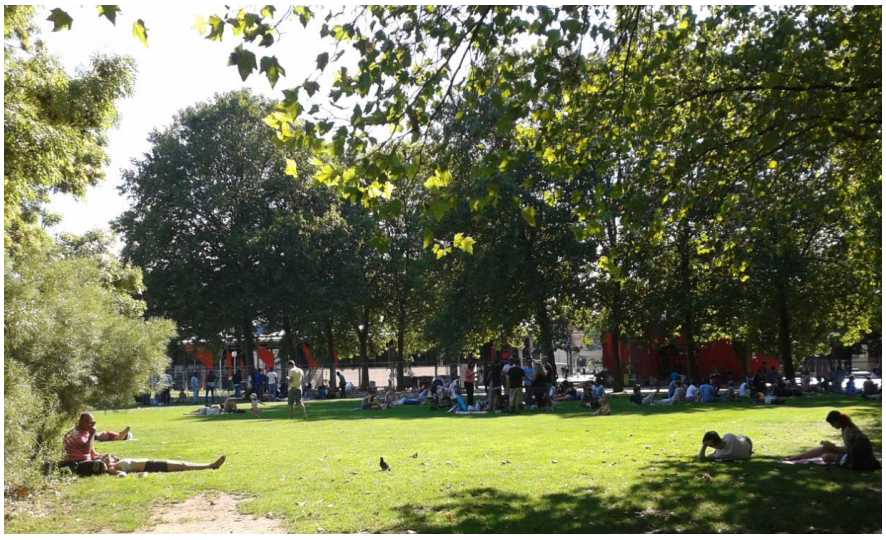


Figure 59. Resting and picnics on the surface in the centre of the park.

Figure 60. Schooling on the surface where the two canals intersect.

There is a smaller area east of this larger one separated by the north-south linear pathway at the north bank of the east–west canal, acting as an extension of the larger space. As it is located by the main linear pathways and has the larger surface next to it, there were usually people sitting on the lawn, some alone, some with couple of friends, and some with a group of people in a circle; but this tiny place was not that active, as there were far fewer dynamic activities taking place.

A quieter area is found hidden behind thematic gardens 1 and 2. Dynamic activities were seldom found occurring on this area: only sometimes during fair weather were a couple of people found there playing badminton or doing exercises. Usually there were stationary activities, such as lying, sitting or sunbathing while reading, and fewer people came here, perhaps due to its secluded location. The last surface is the one along the side of the north–south pedestrian route by the north entrance. This surface was designed to be a larger linear space, but it has been reduced to a small square-like surface. Although this place has good accessibility, in actual use there were fewer activities found occurring on the surface, especially dynamic activities. Even if there were events happening occasionally, such as children's football games, badminton and picnics, these did not last long. Usually after a short period of liveliness, it would again become silent for a long time until it was used again. It seems that if a surface is bigger and more accessible either by vision or by action, it is more likely to generate

dynamic activities and be more active, whereas if a surface is smaller and less accessible, it is more likely to accommodate stationary and quiet activities.

3.2.3 Summary

As described above, events were incidentally observed in each system, and “pragmatic meaning” emerged in the space wherever events occurred. Events are conditional actions; the occurrence of an event can be attributed to particular situations at a particular moment in relation to the space and other events already taking place. Events are varied, transient and constantly transforming, so that “pragmatic meaning” is being produced and ceaselessly accumulating on the spaces over time. “Pragmatic meaning” on one system can be converted to another system, as people move between systems. When people move between folies and paths, folies and surfaces, or paths and surfaces, their activities extend between systems, so that “pragmatic meaning” too transfers between systems.

Some of the activities in folies are programmed, such as workshops and exhibition spaces, and some of the areas in the system of lines are programmed as well, such as children’s playground gardens and the areas with benches. Programmed spaces in some ways serve as the indexical signs, according to Pierce’s terminology. For example, benches were designed for people to sit down on; when one finds a bench in a garden or at the side of a linear path, one might realise that this structure can be used for sitting. The meaning of the bench as a place for sitting therefore will be achieved in the actual space, and the bench is proved to be an index in this case, as the bench and the action of sitting have a physical causal relationship. Similarly, a children’s amusement facility is an indexical sign. Amusement facilities placed in the garden are meant to encourage children to get engaged with them. When children come across these facilities and choose to play in them, again the activities happening in the actual space are in line with the expectations and the meaning of the amusement facilities has been confirmed through actual use. In contrast to the programmed spaces, large parts of the un-programmed spaces – parts of folies, parts of paths and gardens, and the whole area of surfaces – serve as symbolic signs. For example, when people use benches for napping, when children take the

steel stairs of a folie as a big toy, when teenagers skate on curvilinear paths, and when people play football or do exercises on the big lawn of the surfaces, these spaces are symbolic signs to their users. These symbolic signs allow the possibility of future interpretations and future developments, and require the participation of users' understanding and practice. The meaning of symbol is not fixed prior to the occurrence of any activity, but needs users' mental associations to link activities to spaces. As the spaces have not been endowed with meaning before actual practice occurs there, the meaning does not simply transfer from signs to users, but rather is produced by users when they attach themselves to actual spaces. When users encounter a particular space, the existing conditions of that space will influence their thoughts, and arouse their associations between the space and their previous experience, habits and intentions, and then they will conduct their practice in that space. Hence the space will become a symbolic sign, and the activities happening in that space are fully pragmatic practice – the conditional action that depends on the constraints of the space and users' previous experience and creativity.

Anyone who is involved in a space is contributing to enriching the "pragmatic meaning" of that space. Each time one is involved in the space, one can raise a different "pragmatic meaning" based on one's action in that space. One's action in the space, according to observations, is actually not completely random, but depends on environmental and spatial conditions, such as weather, accessibility, existing activities, privacy and spatial forms. When one's subjective intention matches the existing conditions of the space, events will occur, and thus "pragmatic meaning" will be aroused and will grow.

Since "conceptual meaning" leaves room for "pragmatic meaning" to complete it, as "pragmatic meaning" develops the "conceptual meaning" will then be constantly interpreted or re-interpreted and increasingly accomplished following the "vertical" iteration of the "pragmatic meaning". However, the design concept of Parc de la Villette does not have a clear description of the final consequences for the space, such as "to liberate culture". The design concept only has a systematic plan for a spatial structure where potential programmes and events might occur. In this plan, spaces are categorised into three systems of different potential events – point-like, linear and plane. The spaces are abstractly built up, without any

imagination about the ideal consequences; rather, the consequences are left to be made up by users in a way which produces “pragmatic meaning”.

Spaces are physical containers of ongoing events. Spaces are lures, and events are something substantial. Spaces always try to induce the body to explore more possibilities, to encourage it to interact. In Parc de la Villette, everyone seeks their own path and their own particular meaning for the park along that path. Everybody in the park is involved in Tschumi’s concept, everybody who takes action in the park helps to add “pragmatic meaning” to the it and thus further accomplish the “conceptual meaning”, but it is interesting to see that people who are involved in events do not actually know that they are contributing to fulfilling Tschumi’s concept. The concept is updating endlessly, because as long as there are people coming to engage with the spaces, the events will never cease, the production of “pragmatic meaning” will never reach an end, and “pragmatic meaning” will therefore never be complete. As a result, “conceptual meaning” too will be eternally in a state of not being completely accomplished, because the “pragmatic meaning” is endlessly growing. Though one single event cannot live long, and is usually gone in a moment, yet “pragmatic meaning” can be re-created iteratively over time. Each new iteration of “pragmatic meaning” will always tend to be different from the previous one, with multiple meanings disagreeing with each other, and will emerge and re-emerge in the spaces, through which both “pragmatic meaning” and “conceptual meaning” become increasingly abundant, without reaching any boundary or ending.

Chapter 4. Traditional Chinese philosophies: Pragmatic Aesthetics is embodied in "Conceptual Meaning"

Centre Pompidou has clarified how "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" are inter-filtrated on each other. The concern for mass culture which is taken into design concepts gives rise to the two kinds of meaning becoming associated. This idea is accord with Shusterman's interest in mass culture. He takes much effort to justify the value of mass culture, for example he takes rock music as an example to show how people actively interacted with the music using their bodies' movement vigorously and thus they always have plenty of pleasure. But when people are listening to the classical music, they easily get bored. For poplar art like rock music, it gives aesthetics a broader dimension. Similarly, the pragmatic value of Centre Pompidou lies in the way that the architects took the idea of cultural liberation into the design and the way that people engage with public programmes in the building.

"Conceptual meaning" is generated by architects through their encounter with the circumstances of the site, the complexities of the brief, building techniques and materials and so on. How buildings are going to function in order to achieve better social engagement and cultural liberation is considered at the conceptual level, and in actual use the buildings perform as the concepts have promised at some point. As this concept takes public involvement as a central idea, when the idea becomes realised in actual space the idea becomes the interface associating "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning".

The deconstructive project Parc de la Villette presents a containment relationship between these two kinds of meaning, where "pragmatic meaning" is included in "conceptual meaning". Deconstruction is a linguistic theory which rejects the existence of any inherent meaning in language, and holds instead that the meaning of language ought to be produced by users when they are using the language practically according to their particular situations. A deconstructive architecture implies that architecture loses its inherent meanings, and meanings only emerge when people experience the actual spaces. This is to say that for deconstructive architecture, "pragmatic meaning" generated from experience is part of the "conceptual meaning"; only when actual practice has happened and "pragmatic meaning" has

emerged in particular spaces can the idea of deconstruction be fully realised. This is how "pragmatic meaning" works in the fulfilment of the concept. "Pragmatic meaning" is contained in "conceptual meaning".

A good architect might approach a commission with the intention of finding out about the function of the building, the place where it is to be built, its culture and the like, and will then work out a design that seeks to deal with all of these kinds of things, and at some point during this process a concept will arrive. Though the architect at times brings pragmatic thinking into design, he/she can never predict exactly what will exactly happen in real spaces, so the "pragmatic meaning" is usually out of the architect's control. Tschumi seemingly had a concept in mind that "pragmatic meaning" was uncontrollable and it would be users' duty, rather than that of the designer, to find it out, so that Parc de la Villette was created as a meaningless place, leaving an unarticulated void to be clarified by its future users. Therefore, the pragmatic value of the design lies in the architect's concept that contains "pragmatic meaning" as well as in the people's actual experience that produce "pragmatic meaning" and interpret the "conceptual meaning".

This chapter focuses on traditional Chinese philosophies and their connections with pragmatic aesthetics, and then turns to two contemporary Chinese projects whose design concepts are considered as being found in the encounter with traditional philosophies and where pragmatic aesthetics is thus manifested in the designs. The two Chinese examples in this chapter concentrate more on approaches to design in which pragmatic aesthetics can be embodied, thus attempting to provide architects with alternative approaches to design.

Traditional Chinese philosophies that are known as being rooted in pragmatic aesthetics. They stem from the intuitive understanding of the surrounding environment through the body's perceptions; there is an unclear separation between the intellect and bodily senses, between theory and practice, and Chinese tradition is secular, without much concern for the permanent aspect of culture, and tends to focus on things with actual effects, without much intention on describing the reality for the sake of any linguistic concepts or definition. The traditional Chinese ideas are influential to both John Dewey and Richard Shusterman. Their pragmatic

aesthetics is deeply indebted to Chinese thoughts. In the present days, some Chinese architects try to look back to these traditions and bring these ideas into contemporary architectural practices. In this sense, this chapter firstly attempts to set the scene of Chinese culture and clarify its connections to pragmatic aesthetics; then, based on that, it secondly turns attention to the architects' design concept – trying to clarify how the architects intended to find the concepts by encountering with traditional Chinese philosophies and how pragmatic aesthetics is embodied in the process of design and "conceptual meaning".

4.1 Traditional Chinese Philosophies

Chinese culture has always had a secular tradition. It is concerned with the happiness of real life rather than the permanence of an afterlife. Chinese people tend to believe in something that can be felt, immediately experienced, intuitively understood, and that is practically useful, more than in abstract theories. Thus, traditionally, there is hardly any definite division between intellect and body, and between theory and practice. The existence of these traditional ideologies could be attributed to the *I-Ching*, a universal law that originates in the observation of daily elements and the body's engagement in its environment, thus considering the world as an extension of the body.

Traditional Chinese philosophies have considerable influence on pragmatic aesthetics. In *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Richard Shusterman claims that his concept is encouraged by Chinese philosophy and other ancient Asian thoughts.[267] John Dewey was also deeply influenced by his experience of living in China from 1919 to 1921.[268] Therefore, there is a deep affinity between pragmatic aesthetics and traditional Chinese philosophies. This section will briefly indicate some key points of traditional Chinese ideas – the ideas of the *I-Ching*, ambiguity in dualism and the secular culture of China – and will then

[267] Richard Shusterman (1992), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, p. 5.

[268] Richard Shusterman (2004), "Pragmatism and East-Asian Thought", *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 35 (1/2), pp. 13–43, p. 17.

provide clarification on how pragmatic aesthetics is connected to Chinese philosophies.

4.1.1 I-Ching*: Origins in the intuitive understanding of daily phenomena*

The Book of Changes (the *I-Ching*), the ancient divination text and the oldest of the Chinese classics, could be regarded as the root of all Chinese philosophies, including Confucianism and Daoism. Chinese tradition's emphasis on humanism, bodily experience, plurality and everyday life originates in the ideas of the *I-Ching*, as it focuses on changes rather than stability, and is rooted in the belief that the world is the extension of the body, through which we shape the mind and construct our knowledge of the world. *The Book of Changes* describes the two elements of Yin and Yang, and tries to find a universal law of everything through the interpretation of the theory of Yin and Yang. The writing of it began during the Western Zhou dynasty (1000–750 BC), and it was finished by Confucius.[269] In the Warring States period (500–200 BC), a book of commentary written by Confucius was published, known as *Yizhuan*, based on the philosophical analysis of *The Book of Changes*.[270]

The Yin–Yang idea was a simple and intuitive philosophy that originated from the early stage of endeavours to understand the universal laws of the cosmos, and is based on the bodily perceptions and experience of everyday life of Chinese ancestors. *The Book of Changes* conveys that the basic unit constituting the world is not a pure element but a dual mixture of Yin and Yang, such as the sky having both coldness and warmth, and the earth having both hardness and softness. They are opposite principles of matter, but they match and closely rely

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[269] Shiqiang Zeng (2009), *The Mystery of I-Ching 易经的奥秘*, Xi'an: Shanxi Normal University Press, p. 4.

[270] The Book of Change is made up of two parts: the *Yijing 易经*（the main Text）, which is considered to have been written approximately before 1150 BC, and the *Yizhuan 易传* (the Commentary), which was finished around 400 BC. The Commentary has ten parts including *Tuan Zhuan 彖传* (Treatise on Judgments volumes 1 and 2), *Xiang Zhuan 象传* (Treatise on Symbolisms volumes 1 and 2), *Wen Yan Zhuan 文言传* (Treatise on Remarks about Qian and Kun), *Xici Shangxia Zhuan 系辞上、下传*（Appended Statements volumes 1 and 2）, *Shuo Gua Zhuan 说卦传* (Treatise on Remarks about Hexagrams), *Xu Gua Zhuan 序卦传* (Treatise on the Sequence of Hexagrams) and *Za Gua Zhuan 杂卦传* (Treatise on the Names of Hexagrams). Therefore, the Commentary is also known as *Shi Yi 十翼* (Ten Wings).

on each other. So Yin and Yang are considered as being opposite but indispensable to each other, and each is always trying to transform into the other. These attributes were found out through years of observation of daily phenomena and practice.

As can be observed, day and night is seen as a Yin–Yang unity, in which day is Yang and night is Yin; strength and weakness is a unity in which strength is Yang and weakness is Yin; and male and female is a unity in which male is Yang and female is Yin. When there is a day, there must be a night afterwards. But after the night has passed, a new day will come again. Day and night are opposite but joint. Strength and weakness can only be defined by comparing one to the other. No strength or weakness can be identified by considering it independently. The identity of male can be defined by comparing it with the female and vice versa. If there were no opposition, it would neither be possible to identify things by comparing them to each other nor to categorise things into Yin or Yang. This attribute of Yin and Yang echoes a deconstructive idea: nothing is a self-evident matter, and thus there must be elements or ideas mutually complementary so as to define each other. However, this does not mean that any one thing should either be absolutely in the Yin or absolutely in the Yang category.[271] Yin and Yang are relative opposites. If a son is compared with his father, the son is Yin and his father is Yang; but if the son is compared with his wife, he is Yang and his wife is Yin. Again, if skin is compared with viscera, skin is Yang and viscera is Yin; but if the upper half of the body is compared with the lower half, the upper half is Yang while the lower half is Yin.[272] Therefore, it is impossible to categorise one thing as absolutely Yin or Yang, as any thing depends on its counterpart in order for it to be defined, and one thing can have properties of both Yin and Yang according to particular circumstances. Therefore, everyday things that we can see and experience have been categorised into Yin and Yang, and the duality of Yin and Yang is a way to understand the law of the universe.

Another attribute of Yin–Yang is changeability or recyclability. *The Book of Changes* claims that

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[271] Zeng, *The Mystery of I-Ching*, p. 22.

[272] Yungong Lan & Zhuxiang Zhong (1999), "Yin–Yang Thinking and the Characteristics of Chinese Traditional Culture" "阴阳思维与中国传统文化的特征", *Journal of Liangshan University*, 1999 (1), pp. 79–82, p. 81.

everything in the world is ever changing, transforming and recycling. Yin and Yang do not remain stable permanently, but are always tending to transmute to their opposites. The transformation between Yin and Yang, *The Book of Changes* believes, gives birth to new things. So only because Yin and Yang are ever changing are the things in the universe ever developing. There is no ultimate end to this development. Everything proceeds as in a cycle. The feature of recyclability is concluded from the understanding of phenomena in everyday life, such as the cycle of day and night, the alternation of seasons, the ageing of human life, the metabolism of living organisms, the replacement of good fortune and bad fortune, and so on. When these changes reach their extremes, they will turn back in the opposite direction. For example, it is believed in *The Book of Changes* that after the extremely dynamic comes the static, after a storm comes calm, after extreme misfortune comes good fortune.[273]

Based on the study of those phenomenological laws, Fu Xi[274] created the symbols for Yang and Yin – an unbroken line "—" represents Yang and a broken line "--" represents Yin.[275] At first he felt there must be two potential powers in the world to control the universe, in the manner of one power pulling the sun up and one power pushing it down, resulting in sunrise and sunset. However, he ultimately determined the symbols for Yin and Yang according to the difference between the genitals of men and women. The representative of Yang is man and the representative of Yin is woman. Mating between man and woman is considered to be the most primitive but inspiring behaviour for the development of the Yin–Yang idea. When a woman mates with a man, new life will be born, so that the law of change takes shape: when Yin interacts with Yang, new things will be generated, and this becomes the first evident

[273] Zongyi Dou (1995), "Exploration of I-Ching's Philosophical Principle of Dialectical Monism Based on the Enlightenment of Modern Science" "从新科学的启示去探讨《易经》的哲学原理阴阳辩证一元论", *Study on The Book of Changes*, 1995 (3), pp. 71–79, p. 77.

[274] Fu Xi was a folk hero in Chinese legend and mythology, credited with creating humanity and the invention of hunting, fishing and cooking, as well as a writing system of Chinese characters c. 12,000 BC. Fu Xi was counted as the first of the Three Sovereigns at the beginning of the Chinese dynastic period.

[275] Zeng, *The Mystery of I-Ching*, p. 38.

metaphysics in the history of Chinese philosophy.[276]

All changes depend on whether or not there is communication or attraction between Yin and Yang. When Yin and Yang are attracted to each other and interact, new things will be born. However, if Yin and Yang stopped interacting, there would be no changes any more; the world would stop generating new life and things would soon go extinct. Therefore, the fundamental motivation for the continual generation of new life is the interaction between Yin and Yang. Because of the idea of changes, Chinese philosophies are never involved in a debate as to whether the world was created by God or evolved without God: Chinese philosophies are inspired by the everyday phenomenon, believe that the environment is closely linked with human life, and consider that the universe was both created and evolved based on the law of changes.

Chinese philosophies found their metaphysics from the phenomenological laws and decoded the mechanism of the continual generation of everything through an intuitive hypothesis based on the mating between men and women. So how the metaphysical law functions to generate heaven, earth, humans and everything else depends on whether or not there is interaction between Yin and Yang. This is the principle of cosmos in traditional Chinese context. Only when Yin and Yang match can there be the promise of the growth of the world. This primitive idea has the most profound influence on Chinese culture.

4.1.2 Ambiguity in dualism

Chinese cultural customs lay more emphasis on the relationship between things than the intrinsic meaning of individual matters. *The Book of Changes* concerns the relationship of Yin and Yang, Confucianism shows an interest in relationships of social groups, and Daoism pursues the harmonious relationship between life and the environment, and between spiritual life and physical life. The reason Chinese philosophies are more concerned with the

[276] Qingzhong Yang (2006), "On the Dao in the Commentary of the Book of Change", *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, vol. 1 (4), pp. 572–593, p. 573.

relationships between things than with individual things is that they share an original concept that the basic structure on which the world is constructed is not a pure element but a mixture.

Yin and Yang are equal to each other, they are neither in a hierarchy where one term dominates the other, nor in a table status but always tending to interact with the other. The individuals involved in the mixture live harmoniously with and are restricted by each other, which maintains the harmony of the broader universe. One single object does not have one quality only. It could be both good and evil, both white and black, both spiritual and physical, but could not be exclusively good, exclusively white or exclusively spiritual.

Traditional Western philosophy, represented by Plato, has at times had strongly negative attitudes towards the body, thinking of it as something lustful, where sin originates, while considering pure mental spirit as something everlasting and incorruptible that transcends the body.[277] This kind of philosophy overlooks human perceptions and senses and believes in abstract metaphysical aesthetics constructed by philosophers without taking real life into consideration. Plato makes a definite division between the intellect and the body's perceptions.[278] In his opinion, minds, intellects and concepts are superior to bodily perceptions. In *The Republic* he has a strong negative bias against artists. They work with their bodily perceptions and are regarded as imitators and ignorant. People who work with pure intellect are superior to those who work with sensory perceptions. Similarly, when Plato compares the philosopher's role to the physician's, he sees philosophy as the superior practice, since the latter cares about the body's health while the philosopher cares about the health of the soul, which is immortal and nobler than the body.[279] Furthermore, one of the deepest legacies of mind–body separation, particularly associated with René Descartes' philosophy, is "mind–body dualism". In Descartes' view, the mind is thinks, and it is completely different from the body, which is not about thoughts. One is set apart from the other and can exist without

[277] John Dewey (1929), *Experience and Nature*, London: G. Allen & Unwin, p. 249.

[278] Nicholas Pappas (2008), "Plato's Aesthetics", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Online], available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/plato-aesthetics/ (Accessed: 2 January 2016).

[279] Richard Shusterman (2013), "Everyday Aesthetics of Embodiment", in Bhatt, R. (ed.), *Rethinking Aesthetics: The Role of Body in Design*, London: Routledge, pp. 13–35, p. 15.

it.[280] Therefore, in the Western tradition, metaphysics can definitely exist without bodily engagement, and perceptual things, such as art works, are inferior to purely intellectual concepts. There have been attempts to avoid this separation, particularly associated with the British empiricist tradition, including John Locke and David Hume, the American pragmatists, and the French deconstructionists who suggest "hierarchy reversal" of duality, but Chinese philosophy has never had to overcome this problem, because it has always originated in the observation of everyday phenomena and the experience of real life. *The Book of Changes* states in its introduction that all our understandings of the world come from the body's perceptions of and feelings about the surrounding environment. Dong Yugan claims that the world we know is an extension of the body.[281] By perceiving and observing with bodily senses, Chinese ancestors have shaped the world and constructed ways of looking at the world. The metaphysics of *The Book of Changes* stems from ancestors' insight into the law of cosmos, and it can in turn be confirmed by everyday phenomena in everyday life. Its metaphysics is embedded in phenomenological principles, which can only be found by engaging oneself in real life. As a result, there is no intellect–body duality: Chinese philosophy sees that there is an ambiguity in the dualism of intellect and body, but intellect and body ought to be joint and mutually dependent.

In architecture, there is an ambiguity in the distinction between theory and practice. In fact, there is no pure conceptual aesthetics in Chinese architecture.[282] Chinese architectural theory is mainly about construction techniques and conventions according to long-term experience accumulated from everyday life. The Chinese treat architecture simply as a tool, like other ordinary living tools. Traditional architecture is about neither art nor science, but exists for the sake of living. Therefore, Han Baode, a Taiwanese architectural theorist, defines Chinese

[280] Justin Skirry (n.d.), "René Descartes: The Mind–Body Distinction", *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Online], available at: http://www.iep.utm.edu/descmind/ (Accessed: 2 January 2015).

[281] I interviewed Dong in Beijing, 13 November 2015.

[282] Baode Han (2006), *Lectures on Chinese Architectural Culture 中国建筑文化讲座*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, p. 12.

traditional architecture as essentially an "Architecture of Life".[283] Han points out that the idea of an "Architecture of Life" is different from the Western term "humanism", as humanism is about the power of the mind resisting the shackles of divinity. Humanism is a concept of a revolution overthrowing the old way of thinking about life and redefining the value of human life. It acts as a slogan, asserting the need to create a more liveable and a more human-respectable environment for human beings. However, Chinese traditional architecture does not have any conceptual theory and Chinese traditional buildings do not go as deep in conceptual terms as humanism does.[284] Thus, compared with humanism, which offers a spiritual image of an ideal life, the "Architecture of Life" does not reach the conceptual level, as there is no such absolute concept as humanism to direct craftsman, in order to achieve a certain social change. If they have any specific pursuit in their design, it is the pursuit of physical pleasure and better quality of life. Chinese engineers and craftsman never waste time in thinking about how architecture "should" be, but rather take time to build what architecture "can" be to resolve living problems. Spatial forms of traditional architecture reflect Chinese people's daily life in the past – how intellectuals sought to calm the spirit using the landscapes, how the ruling class demonstrated their power, and how rich businessmen enjoyed their luxury lifestyle. The simply structured buildings are firmly combined with life, and thus it is regarded as the "Architecture of Life".[285]

As a result, Chinese traditional architecture is not about pure aesthetic theories, but more about technical conventions developed from previous experience. These conventions are delivered from generation to generation and are modified to adapt to different situations. It can be understood that Chinese architectural theory stems from everyday life and serves everyday life; it is tied closely with physical practice, far from conceptual aesthetics such as Eclecticism, Romanism, Modernism and Regionalism and other terms created in a Western context. Chinese architectural tradition pays less attention to creating new social ideology or

[283] Ibid., p. 178.

[284] Ibid., p. 181.

[285] Ibid., p. 182.

academic concepts, and more attention to practical life. The concept of Red Brick Art Museum does not involve a visual-effect intention. It is a method of design – dealing with functional issues with as less alternations of existing environment as possible. It did not have an expected image of the building form before the finish of the building construction. The architect claims the building form should be the consequence of construction which responses to actual problems of building and use, and the form would be formed up eventually after those problems have been resolved, but it should not be the purpose of the design.

The ambiguity of theory and pragmatism in architecture refers to the emphasis on the body's perceptions and experience in Chinese minds rather than pure spirit, intellect and concept. It is stated above that the origin of Chinese philosophy lies in the understanding of phenomenological laws, and that all understanding of the universe is constructed by bodily senses. The understanding of anything is an extension of the body. The judgement of architecture is also based on bodily senses and perceptions. If living in a building gives people a sense of pleasure, if a building presents the wealth and power of its owner, if a building helps to manage social order and moral behaviours, if a building can function well to accommodate a big family of four generations, or if it is adaptable for further extension and transformation, this building will be regarded as commendable. Bodily perceptions and emotions are highly centred in the design of Xiangshan campus. The concept is about designing a feeling, the "aesthetic sense", and the feeling can only be experienced when the body is deeply engaged in the space. Bodily pleasure is gained through experience and in turn leads to the pleasure of the mind. Body and mind are indispensable matters of life.

Architecture practice requires bodily senses and perceptions in Chinese tradition. As we know, the codes and principles Chinese engineers follow are techniques accumulated from long-term building experience. People judge buildings through their bodily perceptions in the building, so that over time those codes and principles get closer to what will best serve people's lives. About a thousand years ago in the Song Dynasty, the first official treatise on architecture and craftsmanship was born – *Yingzao Fashi* by Li Jie.[286] *Yingzao Fashi* is literally called "Treatise on

[286] Han, *Lectures on Chinese Architectural Culture*, p. 191.

Architectural Methods" or "State Building Standards". Strictly speaking, it is not an academic treatise, but a manual for building construction, as it contains a great many rules for the construction of various structures with particular materials, such as wood, stone, bamboo and tile, as well as paintings and decorations on structures. It is about the technical methods of architectural practice, a set of summaries of previous architectural design and construction experience. So these codes and principles can also be regarded as the laws of living. Building is a way of living, and to live is the reason for architectural practice, in the Chinese mind.

4.1.3 A Secular culture

The preference for pragmatism of Chinese culture is associated with the emphasis on secular life and the absence of religious belief. Chinese mainstream tradition does not include a belief in the permanence of an afterlife. Chinese people think that time is fleeting, just like a white pony jumping across a crevice; everyone lives in a moment and when life is gone, it will not be back. Lin Yutang pointed out this idea in his book *My Country and My People*.[287] In this book he explains that the aim of life lies not in the hope of an afterlife: the idea taught by Christianity that we live in order to die is not comprehensible, nor the idea of Nirvana taught by Buddhism, as it is too metaphysical. The fundamental aim of life, to Chinese people, lies simply in the enjoyment of aspects of real life, such as family life and harmonious social relationships.

Confucius believed that anything that is considered as truth which departs from human life may not be truth, as truth should not depart from human life. Chuang Tse[288] encouraged everyone to find their themselves.[289] The busy self occupied with daily activities is not the real self, but one should pursue the real self through the enjoyment of everyday pleasure. To have

[287] Yutang Lin (2010), *My Country and My People*, Oxford, Oxon: Oxford City Press, p. 96.

[288] *Chuang Tse* 庄子 (Zhuangzi) is an ancient Chinese collection of anecdotes and fables, one of the foundational texts of Daoism. Chuang Tse also refers to the historical figure known as "Master Zhuang" who is the author of the above work. He was an influential Chinese philosopher who lived around the 4th century BC during the Warring States period, a period corresponding to the summit of traditional Chinese philosophy.

[289] Yutang Lin (2007), *The Importance of Living*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, p. 103.

the best enjoyment of life, we should focus all of our bodily senses on our real life, as happiness is sensuous rather than of intellectual.[290] Also, Mencius[291] suggested that we need to live with passion and sentiment in order to perceive the laws of the world we are living in and to appreciate everything that arises in our lives.[292] We have nothing in life unless we have passion, because passion gives us inward warmth and vitality, which enable us to cope with life. In addition, Chinese people realised very early that mortality is inevitable for everybody. This is the saddest and the most touching realisation to the Chinese. "Life passes like a spring dream without a trace"; "our floating life is like a dream, how many times can one enjoy one's self?": both of these sentiments were written down by Chinese poets, expressing their feelings of helplessness about the fleeting life.[293]

However, the sad awareness of mortality makes the Chinese wish to enjoy life more efficiently. Because the existence of the current life is all they have, they have to try harder to enjoy it more. Therefore, the Chinese choose to pay great attention to the aspects of life which can be perceived and controlled, and this attention leads them to try their best to enjoy the current days. So, how to best enjoy this short and limited life is of vital importance, rather than wasting too much time on the thought of a better afterlife, since the afterlife cannot benefit people and cannot be perceived in this life. The focusing on secular enjoyment requires a pragmatic way of thinking. The Chinese people are good at finding efficient ways of coping with living problems, keeping in mind the ideological rule of "twice the yield with half the work". They believe that to obtain more pleasure with less work is an efficient way to use their limited lifetimes. In gardening, for instance, Chinese men of letters have discovered how to get twice the yield with half the work. Chinese men of letters are fascinated by landscapes. Touring around the landscape is one of the most favoured methods of relaxation. Designing artificial gardens at one's home is the best way of borrowing from landscape scenes, thus enabling one

[290] Ibid., p. 136.

[291] Mencius (372–289 BC) was a Chinese philosopher who was the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself.

[292] Lin, *The Importance of Living*, p. 106.

[293] Ibid., p. 169.

to enjoy pleasure from landscapes much more easily. What Chinese men of letters do is to seek the most efficient way to design their gardens. They make ponds by digging soil out of the ground and piling it up to make artificial hills; they plant bamboo beside water to provide greenery and resting places in summer; they set pavilions at the top of hills to act as a focal point in their gardens as well a place from which to enjoy the view; and they connect ponds to natural streams so as to keep water fresh.[294] These pragmatic methods of working together fulfil the men of letter's dreams of enjoying an idyllic rural life in the city realm. In fact, traditional Chinese gardens do not follow any theoretical guide; they are the work that results from pragmatic approaches to design and the aim of providing the most intuitive and perceivable pleasure to those who wish to enjoy their everyday real life. Today, traditional gardens have become one of the representative features of Chinese art, but the value of gardens lies not only in the beauty of the artificial works, but also in the concern for everyday life and pragmatic approaches to gardening. Those pragmatic ways of gardening are borrowed in the design of Red Brick Art Design and Xiangshan Campus, namely, the rule of "twice the yield with half the work" is embodied in the design. The details of how this rule is applied in both the projects will be explained in the sequential sections.

According to *The Book of Changes*, the main function of the law of changes is to change and to generate, which is caused by the interaction between Yin and Yang. The fundamental idea in Chinese philosophy is that everything is in a temporary state and is ready to transform to another state, such as life going towards death, the moon's waxing and waning, and the changing of green leaves to yellow. Whereas Western tradition pays attention to the search for universal truths, the exploration of permanence and unchangeable truth does not make sense to the Chinese. Enlightenment is firstly reached through man's realisation of the self-imposed immaturity of his inability to understand things without reliance on religious dogma. It encourages people to understand the world by themselves, without relying on something that is beyond their own selves. Due to the collapse of the belief that the identity of God serves as the universal truth, intellectuals began to search for another truth to replace this. René

[294] Jiaji Zhang (1993), *Annotation to Yuanye – The Oldest Masterwork of Gardening 园冶全释 – 世界最古造园学名著研究*, Shanghai: Shanxi Public Press, p. 133.

Descartes' scientific rationalism is a model of modern science that asserts that truth exists in rational inference. Jürgen Habermas thought that truth comes out of participation. Where undistorted communication takes place and a perfect consensus is reached, that is where the truth is. Marxism explores the truth in historical inevitability, and capitalism seeks the truth in the free market economy. All of the above seem as substitutes for God as the source of all truth. However, postmodernism goes further, to doubt the existence of truth. Michel Foucault believed that the knowledge of truth is produced by power, which intends to strengthen its status and authority, while Jacques Derrida overturns logocentrism, rejects absolute truth and claims that the meanings of anything vary from situation to situation. Richard Rorty's pragmatism stands opposed to foundationalism, asserting that there is no objective and fixed truth apart from human existence, non-contextually and non-historically. The "truth" in our minds is evolving with social-cultural conditions. What the philosophers are doing is not searching for the truth that is already there but actually creating the subjective existence of their individual values. As a result, when God is dead, as Nietzsche points out, permanence still tries to find an alternative foundation, but permanence has started to be questioned since the last century. It seems that in the Western context, historically, there is a big debate about what permanent truth is, and whether there is still a permanent truth or not. In contrast, however, the Chinese traditional way of thinking is not concerned with the search for permanence or the debate about whether or not there is such a thing as permanent truth. To the Chinese, change is the only permanence.

The acceptance of impermanence in life makes the Chinese calm and peaceful in the face of all kinds of changes: rise and fall, fortune and misfortune, life and death. The acceptance of impermanence also makes them realise that only by paying attention to the continual generation of new life will things keep flourishing. Therefore, the continuation of family plays a considerable role in the Chinese mind, and buildings serve only as utensils for the purpose of solving living problems associated with the development of family. Hence, buildings, including temples, do not possess any value of permanence and are not seen as having any responsibility to present this value. That is why Chinese architecture does not attempt to use stone as the main constructional material. In fact, as early as the Han dynasty (202–220 BC),

brick-making technology had been invented. Also, the technology of construction of brick arches came to full maturity and was widely applied in the Han dynasty, but this was only used in mausoleums. By the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties (AD 420–589), significant progress had been made in stone-working techniques made a big progress, and by the Sui dynasty (AD 581–618), proficiency in stone arch technology had already reached a highly professional level.[295] However, the Chinese did not consider durable materials, such as brick and stone, as the main constructional material; rather, they chose wood, a material with a short lifespan.

Ji Cheng points out a realistic attitude in the Chinese mind in his book *Yuanye*[296]: to the Chinese, what they create should be of the same lifespan as their own life. It is not necessary to produce something extra for offspring, since offspring might not be satisfied with what their elder generations have created.[297] It is a waste of time to spend decades on building one building. The first consideration is how to accomplish a project quickly, because the Chinese are too impatient to wait longer than necessary to enjoy the benefit the building will provide, let alone to think about the value of permanence. It is easier and quicker to construct buildings with wood than stone, and each part of building structures is standardised, which makes construction more efficient.[298] But as wood has a short lifespan, buildings therefore also have lives. Consequently, another meaning of Han Baode's "Architecture of Life" is that the life of architecture is similar to human life, with unpredictable vicissitudes and limited span. If someone is at the summit of their career, for instance, and has a high-status job, their family will be proud of this, and their house might be refurbished and decorated at such times. But when this person suffers misfortune, for example losing their business, they will be not in the

[295] Han, *Lectures on Chinese Architectural Culture*, p. 188.

[296] Ji Cheng was a Chinese landscape garden artist in the 17th century. His book *Yuanye 园冶 was* the first scholarly work dealing with landscape gardening in Chinese history, and it still acts as a manual for those who are interested in classic Chinese gardens and the study of the art of Chinese landscape gardening.

[297] Yunhe Li (2005), *Cathay's Idea: Design Theory of Chinese Classical Architecture 华夏意匠：中国古典建筑设计原理分析*, Tianjin: Tianjian University Press, p. 25.

[298] Ibid., p. 24.

mood and do not have the money to manage the house, so the building will decay with the decline of its owner. Therefore, the life of the building is part of the life of its owner and the fortune of the building is correlated with that of its owner. Not only ordinary dwellings but royal architecture too has a lifespan. Usually, when a new dynasty overturns the previous one the new king will build a new palace for himself, to replace the old one in order to display his prestige in the form of architecture. At the least, the old palace must be refurbished or transformed according to the will of the new king. With the increasing prosperity of a dynasty, royal buildings will increasingly flourish in number, scale and degree of luxury. But once the dynasty is in decline, there will be less time and wealth focused on architectural development, and when the dynasty gets to the end of its life, architecture will be removed and will be displaced by a new power. The life of the royal architecture is therefore part of the life of the dynasty, and the fortune of the royal architecture is related closely with that of the dynasty.

Therefore, Chinese culture believes in the idea of metabolism – "replace the old with the new", "get rid of the stale and bring forth the fresh" – so that the conservation of old buildings is only a modern discourse to the Chinese.[299] Chinese people also believe that "long-term flourishing must turn to decline", that "after decline there will be rebirth", and thus they embrace their destinies, rather than fighting for the permanence of one single life.[300] When things approach their extreme points, it is time for them to turn back in another direction. This idea of metabolism seems connected to pragmatists' assertion of thinking afresh. When individuals come across a new experience that creates a problem for them, this is the time at which they set out for new ideas. They might find that old values cannot satisfy the current situation any longer; thus, from then on they begin to seek a modified opinion. The ideas are never "true", but are merely something gratifying the current desire. There is never a terminal point, but always a constant process of forward movement, the developing meanings attaching to the present, as people are continuously thinking in new situations and foreseeing new consequences.

[299] Han, *Lectures on Chinese Architectural Culture*, p. 189.

[300] Ibid., p. 199.

Architecture can be seen as following the same law of metabolism. Architectural design is a metabolic process. In the design of Red Brick Art Museum, the architect did not presume a definite picture of the final building form at the beginning, but rather he resolved the functional problems little by little according to the current conditions of the existing space (an old factory and a discarded site), in order to make the space fit the function of an art museum and a garden of pleasure. The conditions of the existing space were continuously updated, problems were constantly renewed, and the design was moved forward. Likewise, the meaning of Parc de la Villette also follows the idea of metabolism. The architect had the idea in mind that the meaning of the space is never fixed, but is constantly changing afresh, as events dynamically happen in the space.

The vicissitude of architecture in a long time span also follows the rule of metabolism. The architecture usually evolves with the growth of families and with change of ownership. When it reaches the prosperous extreme, it will go into decline; and when it reaches its ultimate low point, it will go up again. Private gardens are typical evidences demonstrating the evolution of architecture. Lingering Garden is located at the city fringe of Suzhou, east of China. Lingering Garden was firstly commissioned by an exonerated official Xu Taishi in 1593. A stonemason Zhou Shicheng designed and constructed the garden and called it initially as East Garden. After reconstruction by Liu Su in 1798, the Lingering Garden came into a flourishing period and became a public resort. But a hundred years later the Taiping rebellions made it turn to a decaying period.[301] However, Sheng Kang arrived about 20 years later, repaired all damage, added new artistic works and renamed the garden, and the garden soon entered a flourishing period again. After the rise, the garden went to a fall again during the Second Sino-Japanese War.[302] The garden was abandoned and even turned to be breeding place for army's horses.

[301] Taiping Rebellion (literally "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement") was a massive rebellion or civil war in China that lasted from 1850 to 1864, which was fought between the established Qing dynasty and the Christian millenarian movement of the Heavenly Kingdom of Peace. The war was the largest in China since the Qing conquest in 1644, and ranks as one of the bloodiest wars in human history.

[302] The Second Sino-Japanese War (July 7, 1937 – September 9, 1945) was a military conflict fought primarily between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan.

Fortunately, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Suzhou government took over and renovated the garden, and it was re-open to public in 1954.[303] As a result, the Lingering Garden witnesses the vicissitudes of several families and a piece of history of the country. Today's garden, though it is still existing, is no longer the same as what it was initially, since numbers of additions, extensions and modifications carried out by different owners over a long history. Therefore, architecture is always in a temporary state and always subject to change, just like the recycling of the seasons and the alteration of the wax and wane of the moon. Thus, architecture, in the Chinese mind, follows the law of cosmos together with all other elements of the world.

Figure 61. Lingering Garden, Suzhou, 1593 onwards.

There is great deal of flexibility for traditional buildings to grow and shrink. Usually, traditional Chinese buildings are constituted around courtyards. One courtyard with its surrounding buildings is the most basic spatial form, shared by all types of traditional Chinese architecture.[304] The tiniest dwelling is made up of one unit, one courtyard enclosed by

[303] Fuxi Shen (2005), "Appreciation of Famous Gardens in Suzhou (Four): The Lingering Garden" "'苏州名园'欣赏（四）：留园", *Garden*, 2005 (3), pp. 8–9, p. 8.

[304] Lei Ou (2005), "Analysis on Traditional Courtyard Spaces" "浅析传统院落空间", *Sichuan Building Science*, vol. 51 (3), pp. 122–125, p. 122.

buildings along three or four sides. The growth of dwellings is about adding units.[305] First, courtyards will be added along the main axis, and then courtyards will be developed along two wings. When the family is growing, the tiniest core of the dwelling remains unchanged and more units will be added along the axis and two wings; when the family is in decline, courtyard units will be gradually abandoned and the dwelling will shrink back to what it used to be at the beginning; however, it can still meet the basic needs of a family. So, the basic form of a courtyard unit ensures the flexibility for the development of traditional buildings. A standardised form of spatial structure also gives rise to the high level of flexibility. This standardised form is the simplest prototype of structure that is universally adaptive, regardless of the scale of the buildings.[306] The standardised form takes a "column grid" and "roof structure" as its basis. A "Column grid" is a grid constituted of latitudinal axes and longitudinal axes used for arraying columns. The arraying of the column grid reflects the roof structure. Each column located at the crossing point of latitudinal and longitudinal axes bears the load coming from the roof. The spacing between two longitudinal axes is called "Jian", and the spacing between two latitudinal axes is called "Jia". Therefore, the building scale can be simply and accurately presented by "Jian" and "Jia". The latitudinal side usually acts as the front façade, so usually the number of "Jian" is odd, otherwise a row of columns would follow the central line, taking over the space of the main entrance. Keeping to one simple standardised spatial structure gives traditional Chinese architecture a high degree of inclusivity and adaptability. This breaks the law that one form links to one particular function. No matter the function of the building – private houses, palaces or temples, they all can follow the same standardised form, as this form is capable of being adapting to different living activities. Therefore, the simplified and widely-adaptive form made it to be a building method recorded as a standard structural prototype in architectural conventions, and thus it managed to prevail over the East for thousands of years.

[305] Han, *Lectures on Chinese Architectural Culture*, p. 200.

[306] Li, *Cathay's Idea*, p. 134.

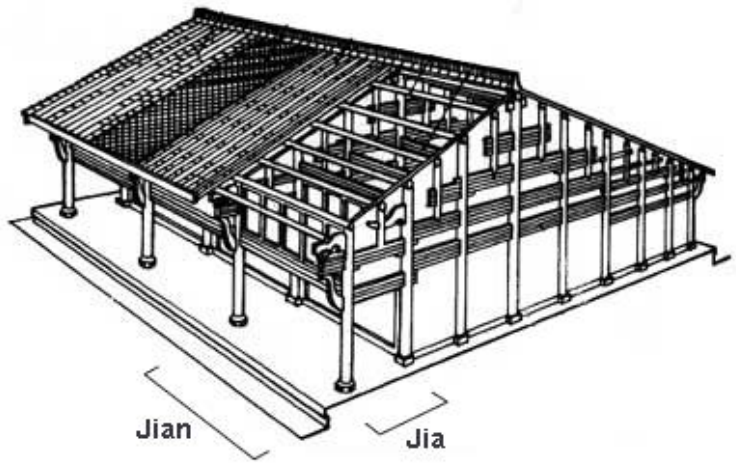

Figure 62. Standardised spatial form of traditional Chinese building.

The flexibility firstly means the structure of the building is easily reconfigurable. Builders intend to make the building neutral and modular so that it would allow for possible transformations in the future. The structural framework basically consists of a system of wooden pieces which are connected by mortise and tenon Besides the physical flexibility, the second dimension of flexibility would be about programmatic evolution, which means that the events taking place in the fixed architectural structure can be changed – architecture can be easily adapted to a temple, a house, a school or a market. These two dimensions of flexibility of traditional Chinese architecture are coincident with that of Centre Pompidou: the building structure of Centre Pompidou is designed so that it can be disassembled and reassembled, potentially allowing the building to be extended or shrunk in due course, and the changeable structure enables the change of uses, thus achieving programmatic evolution. Moreover, the exposure of the internal building structures displayed by Centre Pompidou seems to echo traditional Chinese buildings from the far east, as both emphasise the materiality of structure and structural techniques.

In brief, it has been discussed that traditional Chinese culture is rooted in pragmatism. The *I-Ching*, the oldest Chinese classic, originates in the observation of everyday phenomena and life experience. The idea of Yin–Yang which is central to the *I-Ching* is concerned with the relationships between things rather than with individual objects, and this has a profound

influence on the way of thinking about dualities, such as man and woman, individual and society, intellect and body, theory and practice, etc. Mainstream Chinese tradition focuses on secular life and does not believe in permanence. These rooted ideas have a huge effect on social ideologies and the methods of art creation, including architectural design. In present days, some literary architects tend to return to these traditional ideas and try to find design concepts for contemporary architectural projects from an encounter with tradition. The subsequent sections will discuss the ways in which pragmatic aesthetics is indebted to Chinese philosophy, thus bridging Eastern and Western thought, before particularly focusing on two cases showing how contemporary projects attempt to respond to traditional ideas

4.1.4 The affinity between pragmatic aesthetics and traditional Chinese philosophies

The above provides a general idea of some key ideologies of Chinese tradition. Chinese traditional culture emphasises the bodily senses, daily life, practice and changes rather than intellect, theory and idealist philosophies. Pragmatic aesthetics stresses sensations, actions, practice, pluralist ideas and popular culture. It seems that there is a great deal of overlap between the orientations of pragmatic aesthetics and classical Chinese philosophy. Actually, in *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* Richard Shusterman claims that his concept was encouraged by Chinese philosophy and other strands of ancient Asian thought.[307] John Dewey was also deeply influenced by his experience of living in China from 1919 to 1921. His daughter mentioned that this experience acted as the rebirth of Dewey's intellectual enthusiasms, and that thus Dewey considered China as country nearest to his mind after his own.[308] Therefore, there is a deep affinity between pragmatic aesthetics and traditional Chinese philosophies. What follows is a brief discussion of the themes shared by these two philosophies.

One of the grounds that pragmatism shares with classical Chinese philosophy is a focus on

[307] Richard Shusterman (1992), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, p. 5.

[308] Richard Shusterman (2004), "Pragmatism and East-Asian Thought", *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 35 (1/2), pp. 13–43, p. 17.

feelings. They share the insight that "feeling is a crucial ground and engine of morality and that feeling also pervades our rational thinking".[309] The master Confucius avoided talking about the debate of human nature (whether the essential human nature is good or evil), and so did pragmatists. Debates about human nature are unnecessary, but a focus on ways to improve human nature is necessary. They believe that human nature can be improved by conscious efforts of learning and refinement with bodily feelings. Even rational thinking develops through feelings. The thoughts constructed in the mind are shaped through bodily senses and practice rather than purely intellectual contemplation.

The most central theme in which the two philosophies overlap can be called humanism. Pragmatism insists that philosophy is shaped by the human condition and human purpose, and it in turn serves to preserve, cultivate and perfect human life. Philosophy has social purpose, aiming to approach human benefits, not merely describing reality for the sake of producing sentences. Philosophies should engage with experience and actions that are broader than formulated truth. The value of philosophies lies in promoting concrete human experience and possibilities. Similarly, traditional Chinese philosophers were interested more in perfecting humanity through practising than in providing linguistic representation of reality. The thinkers regarded language not as a means of describing reality but rather as a means of guiding behaviour. Philosophers should work on how to improve human life rather than compiling verbal definitions and abstract propositions.[310]

Confucius is passionate about music, but he does not offer a formal definition of music. Instead, he provides guidance on how to realise musical value by offering examples of musical excellence and failures, by providing critical commentary and by proposing exemplary methods of practice.[311] The design of Red Brick Art Museum shows a similar idea: the architect did not offer a definite concept of what the building would represent; instead, he provided guidance on how to transform the existing building into a functional art gallery.

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[309] Richard Shusterman (2015), "Somaesthetics and Chinese Philosophy: Between Unity and Pragmatist Pluralism", *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, Vol. 10 (2), pp. 201–211, p. 206.

[310] Shusterman, "Pragmatism and East-Asian Thought", p. 19.

[311] Ibid.

Art is a practical way of providing beauty in everyday life. Art is a means of ethical education that can refine people by cultivating a good sense of order and shared experience of harmony. To Confucius, the aesthetic model of good government works by exemplary attraction and emulation rather than by commandments, threats and punishments. Good conduct or character is understood aesthetically – through the proper "countenance", "demeanour" and "expression", virtue will be displayed, and it will thus contribute to social harmony and good government. Therefore, Confucianism's emphasis on the functionality of art and aesthetic experience demonstrates that pragmatic aesthetics is not a modern system of thought, but rather has a rich, long and influential philosophical tradition.[312]

Pragmatism sees art as a cultural product but also recognises the art's natural roots. This means that art is shaped by human history and culture, and human history and culture are partly structured by the natural world, the geographical environment. Similarly, Confucianism also regards "ritual as a natural art", because the forms of rituals are structured through dynamic interactions between natural world and human mind.[313] The design of Xiangshan Campus realises this idea by responding to the natural environment as well as considering regional building materials and techniques.

Pragmatism appreciates the importance of finding the most useful mean in various extremes, asserting that this mean is not fixed but rather consists of a dynamic balance that best fits the current situation in a changing and plural context.[314] Sensitivity to change is also rooted in Chinese philosophies. *The Book of Changes*, the oldest Chinese classic, claims that one of the features of the world is that it is ever-changing and recycling in a balanced state; this concept has been influential on subsequent Chinese philosophies. The building form should be a consequence of a dynamic search for the most suitable balance. It is generated through the design process, rather than being decided at the beginning of the design for visual purposes. This idea can be exemplified in the design of Red Brick Art Museum. The architect had this idea in mind as the design concept, not having a particular expectation of what the building form

[312] Ibid., pp. 20–21

[313] Ibid., p. 25.

[314] Ibid., p. 27.

would be at the beginning: the form was gradually shaped through the design process in the dynamically changing context. Each step of the design is about finding a mean, a balanced solution that aims to meet the requirement of a gallery according to the existing circumstances. As circumstances are updated, the design problems change, solutions are worked out and the design moves forward. Therefore, the process of design can be seen as a course of seeking means.

In the pragmatist view, things in the world are partly separated and partly connected. We can recognise the value of the distinctions of one thing without separating it completely from others. The classical Chinese philosophies also take this view, as evidenced in the fact that there is a Chinese term describing the universe, "*wanwu*", which literally means "the ten thousand things".[315] This implies that the Chinese traditionally see the universe not as a monistic mass but as differently related matters that can be joined to make the whole.

Shusterman thinks that Chinese philosophy's open-mindedness of approach is deeply associated with pragmatism's fundamental pluralism.[316] Rather than seeking the singular truth and excluding all other views, they appreciate all complementarities which could contribute to their ideas, thus combining the insights of various viewpoints in a more flexible synthesis. Confucius believes that humility, to other people and to ideas, is a form of wisdom. Pragmatists express a similar idea by addressing fallibilism – a recognition that any idea we hold as the truth could be refuted by future experience, so that we have the right to doubt any present theory and to seek evidence to refute it. Theories or truths are never fixed. Both pragmatism and Chinese philosophies resist certainty and inflexibility, instead embracing different views and anything fresh. Both Centre Pompidou and Parc de la Villette manifest the idea of pluralism. Centre Pompidou is concerned with public consciousness, public interests and the lively and plural aspects of culture. Parc de la Villette does not have monistic "conceptual meaning" but requires people's diverse experience for its concept to be fully interpreted, and thus meaning changes and is constantly renewed as new events happen dynamically in the park.

[315] Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and Chinese Philosophy", p. 204.

[316] Shusterman, "Pragmatism and East-Asian Thought", p. 27.

Another important theme that pragmatists and classical Chinese philosophies share is the emphasis on pleasure and enjoyment. Western aesthetics is traditionally unfriendly to pleasure, which is considered as subordinate to the intellectual truth. This is partly because pleasure is strongly associated with sensuality, desire and the body, which have traditionally been seen as obstacles to true knowledge. However, pragmatic aesthetics denies this division between bodily pleasure and intellectual truth. It closely links these concepts and sees that intellectual knowledge comes out of bodily feelings, understanding and experience. Pragmatists regard pleasure as qualities of an activity that enhance and fulfil the activity and make it more zestful. Confucius also presents pleasure as a positive feeling arising from activities, and recognises the connections between practice and knowledge, and bodily senses and intellectual thoughts, by saying that "having studied, to then repeatedly apply what you have learned – is this not a source of pleasure? To have friends come from distant quarters – is this not a source of enjoyment?"[317]

Shusterman puts considerable emphasis on the cultivation of the body as the central tool of self-cultivation, in order for us to have better "perception, action, virtue and happiness". He names this bodily dimension of philosophy "somaesthetics". Somaesthetics is a "study of the experience and use of one's sentient body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic perception (aesthetics) and creative self-fashioning".[318] The classical Chinese philosophies also intended to find ideas from bodily dimensions, exemplified by the *I-Ching*, which involves the belief that the world is the extension of the body, and is constructed through bodily perceptions and actions. Both pragmatic aesthetics and classical Chinese thought require concern with the body and claim to improve the use of the body by enhancing awareness of bodily feelings and actions. The design purpose of Xiangshan Campus is about a kind of "aesthetic sense". Wandering around the campus, people may engage in various spatial scenes with the movement of the body, through which aesthetic feelings and a sense of pleasure will emerge simultaneously.

[317] Ibid., p. 30.

[318] Richard Shusterman (2009), "Pragmatist Aesthetics and Confucianism", *The Journal of Aesthetics Education*, vol. 43 (1), pp. 18–29, p. 25.

Pragmatism does not regard aesthetics as contradictory to asceticism. Even the simple, ascetic life has its own enjoyment and beauty. Likewise, Confucius asserts: "To eat coarse food, drink plain water, and pillow oneself on a bent arm – there is pleasure to be found in these things."[319] The aim of presenting the simplicity and purity of countryside life in the design of Xiangshan Campus echoes the idea of the integration of aesthetics and asceticism. People can have aesthetic feelings by experiencing the simple countryside life encapsulated in the campus.

The next sections are going to illustrate two Chinese contemporary projects, trying to clarify how the architects intended to find concepts from traditional philosophies and how pragmatic aesthetics are embodied in these examples. The design of Xiangshan Campus explains the way in which Chinese literary architects pursue poetry in everyday life. The pursuit of poetry in everyday life is a design concept which tries to achieve an "aesthetic sense". This sense needs to be gained through the body's perceptions in actual spaces rather than understood through abstract ideas. The architect tried to design the "aesthetic sense" and expected that people will be able to gain this sense. Usually, architects find inspiration for "aesthetic sense" from landscape and attempt to transfer landscape scenes into city life. What literary architects attempt to create is a kind of living atmosphere, a feeling of life. Literary architects always try to sense how people might feel in a particular place, and their designs are based on those expected feelings. The pursuit of the poetry of everyday life, which comes from the tradition of the concerns of the body and the sense of everydayness, is where "conceptual meaning" lies. The "aesthetic sense" can only be gained when one fully exposes one's body in actual experience; in this way, pragmatic thoughts are engaged with the concept. The emphasis on the body and everyday life is rooted in the *I-Ching*, which thinks that the world is the extension of the body: all understandings of the world come from the body's perceptions of the surrounding environment.

[319] Shusterman, "Pragmatism and East-Asian Thought", p. 31.

4.2 Traditional Chinese Philosophies in Design: Following rather than Altering the Object's Original Features

Red Brick Art Museum, a rebuilt project based on an abandoned factory in Beijing, conveys the concept of following rather than altering the object's original features, providing a principle for the creation of new things based on existing circumstances with minimal alternation. This principle is widely applied in handcrafted works, painting, gardening and poetry. Pragmatic thinking is associated with the design concept. The concept is about a design method, a pragmatic way of creating new things by virtue of existing conditions, originating from the Yin–Yang idea. When existing circumstances match the imagery of the new design, new things will be created. The concept of following rather than altering the original features of an object implies the idea of Yin and Yang: the features of the original object and the imagery of the new space make a Yin–Yang unit, and when the two match, a new creation will be generated.

The aesthetic value of Red Brick Art Museum lies in pragmatism. One important feature of Dewey's pragmatic aesthetics is his "somatic naturalism" – beauty arises from humans' natural needs and demands of life. Shusterman also stresses living beauty – that aesthetics should originate in practice and action. The aesthetic value of Red Brick Art Museum comes from its design concept, from the fact that the building form is worked out in such a way as to satisfy the functional requirements of the space as a gallery, to incorporate human sensations and all other factors related closely with humans' natural perceptions, bodily needs and experience. The building's form was not intentionally created, but it was generated by itself as the pragmatic issues were worked out, according to existing context. The visual effect of the form was not involved in the design. Form is the consequence of the design rather than the purpose. The pre-condition for approaching this consequence is humans' natural needs, perceptions and practice within particular circumstances.

Pragmatic aesthetics emphasises a sort of dynamic aesthetic experience, which means art does not exist only in static artefacts displayed in galleries, but also in the dynamic way in which it is created and in our dynamic sensual experiences of it. Red Brick Art Museum is a good example reflecting the idea that aesthetic value exists in the dynamic method of creating

a building. This is a positive example, demonstrating the basic views of pragmatic aesthetics. The beauty comes from the architect's experience in creating the building, lies in the generative process, not the static forms that come out of the creation.

Therefore, the purpose of this example is to see the way in which the architect approaches the consequence, namely, the dynamic process of creating meaningful spaces by applying his design concept – following rather than altering the object's original features, and hence responding to pragmatic aesthetics.

4.2.1 The principle in art creation

Following the object's original features does not mean sticking to one inflexible rule. The essence of "following" is about generating new things according to the current circumstances of an object, whether in painting, gardening, poetry, craft or architecture. Circumstance both restricts and inspires new creation, and that new creation might be the only outcome that is suitable for that particular circumstance. If the circumstance is Yin, the picture conceived in the artist's mind is Yang. This approach of applying the Yin–Yang idea in artistic creation tears down the boundary between concept and practice. No abstract concept is pre-formed before reaching any actual practice. Concept should be established as a means of making the best use of existing situations. Once the imagined picture and particular circumstances match, a new creation will be generated. A painting depends on the painting materials and what the artist wants to express; a poem depends on the language the poet uses and the poet's emotions, and gardening depends on the existing conditions of the site and the pleasure the garden aims to provide. When painting materials match the artist's anticipated expression, when the words match the poet's emotion, when the conditions of the site match the anticipated spatial pleasure of the garden, artistic creations will be born.

It is recorded that there was a special way of painting in the Song dynasty (AD 960–1279). Painting work started not with drawing materials but from the making of broken walls. An artist would ask a workman to make uneven broken walls by throwing mud randomly onto the wall. After the wall was completely dry, a sheet of silk paper would be put on the wall surface

and the painting job would be ready to go. Artists would use the paintbrush and ink to make a rubbing of the random and irregular patterns of the wall onto the silk paper, and once the ink was dry would create images on the basis of these random and irregular patterns. By making a rubbing from the broken wall, the drawings would look more organic.[320] These meaningless patterns were given meaning by imagining them as concrete objects in the drawing. Some might be seen as mountain peaks and the artist would add a pavilion on the top, some might be seen as streams and the artist would draw small boats to match, and some might be seen as big tree trunks and the artist would draw treetops to complete the trees.

Therefore, the random and irregular ink patterns on the sheet of silk paper were pre-circumstances; what artists needed to do was to conceive images in their mind based on these pre-circumstances and draw on that silk paper. When the conceived pictures matched the pre-circumstances, a painting would be done, just as when Yin interacts with Yang new things are born. Therefore, in this special kind of painting, artists' creations followed the patterns randomly produced from the broken wall. Artists tried to find the best ways to make use of these meaningless patterns. There was no preconceived idea of the final creation before the making of the wall, but creative ideas were inspired by random work, in flexible and unexpected situations. The original features of the ink patterns is not altered – following the principle, the painting's meaning is found out in the process of matching the original patterns and the creation. An artist in the Song dynasty, Song Di, summarised three steps for this special method of painting.[321] First, the broken wall has to be observed. As the broken wall is created randomly by throwing mud freely onto the wall, the appearance of the wall is similar to some characteristic of the organic environment. Observing the broken wall, one could discover a mountain and stream, similar to mountain and stream in real landscape. Second, the artist has to imagine what the drawing could be like. This is the step of matching existing conditions and imagery – artists conceive ideal images in their minds according to the images suggested by the broken wall. The last step is to produce a painting based on the ideal images the artist has

[320] Yugan Dong (2012), *Broken Walls and Ruins 败壁与废墟*, Shanghai: Tongji University Press, p. 13.

[321] Ibid., p. 14.

conceived earlier.

In the preface to *Yuanye*, Ji Cheng introduces some simple key points for gardening.[322] The main steps of gardening echo Song Di's method of painting. Similarly, the first step is examining the basic conditions of the site – terrain, trees and plants, existing stones and water. The second step is, again, picturing possible images. Some areas may have to be raised to represent a hill, while some may have to be lowered to show a valley; some areas may require a rock to be added, and some may require a pavilion. The last step is the construction of the garden construction to the imagery the gardener has in mind. Once this imagery is completely matched with the conditions of the existing site, a new garden will come into being.

The making of utensils also conforms to this principle. Poet Bai Juyi described this method as "by making the vessel follow the shape of the material, the genius will be found inside" in one of his poems, "Genius Seems Like Clumsiness".[323] In Bai's view, talented creation ought not to be an absolute concept coming out of nothing, but ought to take the existing conditions of materials as a reference. This seems plain and clumsy, but following the original features does not simply equate to completely complying with existing circumstances without adding any originality; rather, it aims to achieve "twice the yield, half the work" – the "genius" in Bai's terms. According to Bai's poem, there are also three steps for making utensils, corresponding to those for painting and gardening. Analogous to Song Di's wall observation and Ji Cheng's site examination, the first step in making utensils is material investigation. Following analysis of the existing circumstances of the material, the second step is, again, conceiving ideal imagery based on the requirements of the utensil and matching these with material conditions. For example, when the carpenter finds a piece of timber that is straight on one side but curved on the other, he might decide that the straight part is probably suitable for making a beam for a building, and the curved part could be used as a wheel for a carriage.[324]

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[322] Ibid., p. 14.

[323] Ibid., p. 17.

[324] Yugan Dong (2013), "Designing according to Circumstances – Design for the Red Brick Contemporary Art Museum" "随形制器 – 北京红砖美术馆设计", *Architecture Journal*, 2013 (2), pp. 44–51, p. 50.

The last step, again, is working on the utensil and making the imagery come to life in it. Beam and wheel are made by following the character of the timber rather than by dominating and changing the existing features. According to Bai Juyi, the gist of image matching is "following rather than altering the object's original features", while the ideal result of matching is "Twice the yield, half the work".[325] The carpenter does not change any feature of the timber but makes best use of both characteristics of it, straight and curving. The carpenter's work responds to the rule of following rather than altering the object's original features. At the same time, the carpenter matches the existing features of the timber with the required qualities of a beam and a wheel, which achieves "twice the yield, half the work".

4.2.2 The principle in architectural design

Reliance on existing circumstance is widely applied in artistic creation and craft-making in everyday Chinese life. If we bring this principle into architectural design, matching the circumstances of the existing site with an ideal design image, we will have a building that will take into consideration the preconditions and will result in "twice the yield, half the work". Red Brick Art Museum is an attempt to incorporate the idea of reliance on existing characters, following Bai Juyi's view that the vessel should assume the shape of the material.

[325] Ibid.

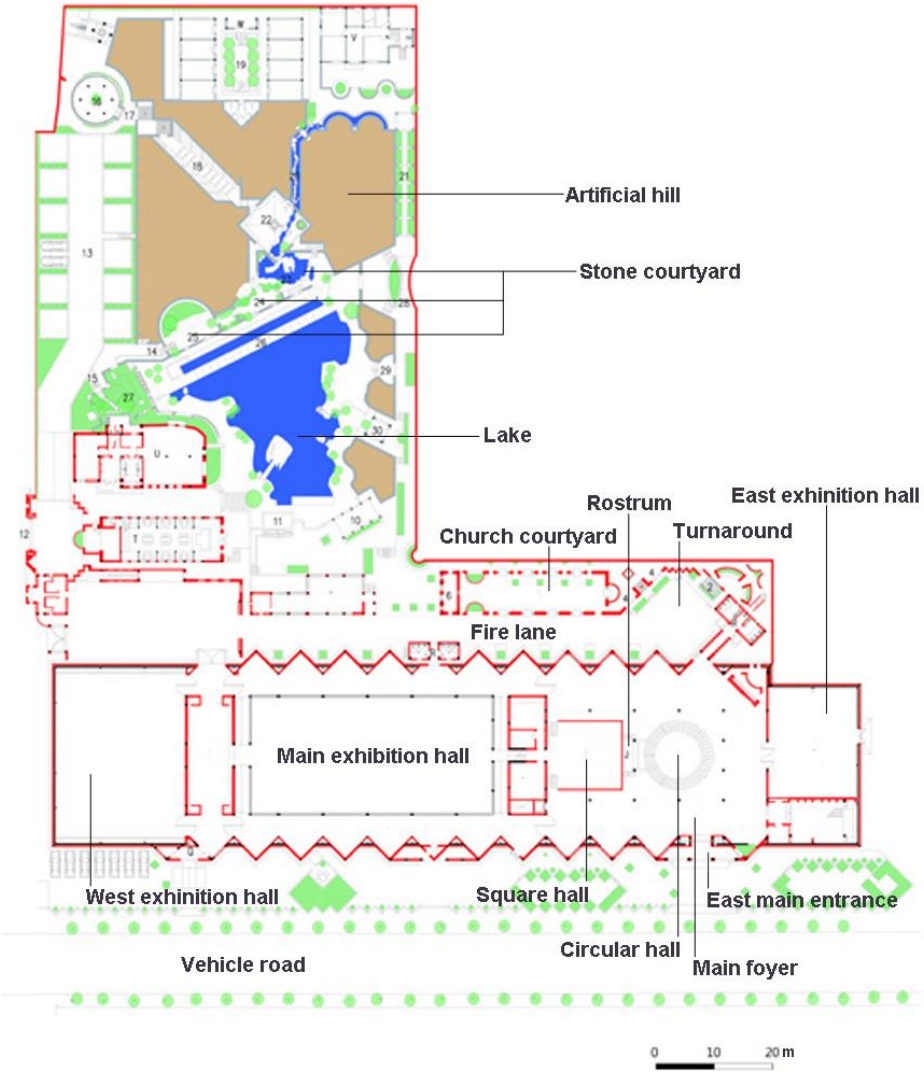


Figure 63. Ground-floor plan of Red Brick Art Museum and the garden.

Red Brick Art Museum is a rebuilt project based on an old abandoned factory located in the northeast suburb of Beijing. The rebuilt project is about 4,000 square metres and the project was accomplished in 2011.[326] All of the exterior walls are built by piling up red bricks and there has been no cutting or reshaping of any single brick; this is why the building is named "Red Brick Art Museum". Dong Yugan, the designer, described the current situation of the factory as "simple, crude, and huge".[327] There were almost no interior partition walls. Exterior walls were exposed to the air with 6×6-metre openings arrayed in a line along two long walls;

[326] Yugan Dong (2015), *Heaven and Paradise 天堂与乐园*, Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, p. 96.

[327] Dong, *Broken Walls and Ruins*, p. 22.

one of the walls faced the main street, while the other faced a blank inner area. These large openings meant that existing conditions were far from what is required of an exhibition building that needs sufficient interior displaying walls for art works. Above the simple steel-frame ceiling, there was a sun-roof with strip-shaped skylights, running from south to north. Although the sun-roof provided good natural light, the direct light that comes through it could bring trouble for exhibitions.

Figure 64. Old abandoned factory.

- *Transformation of exterior walls*

Transforming exterior walls was a major difficulty of the project, and how to make ingenious use of existing walls was the key to the concepts of "following rather than altering the object's original features" and "twice the yield, half the work". Successive openings on the wall were the major problem, as what art museums need for exhibitions is closed exhibition walls and uniform diffused light. In order to have continuous exterior walls, Dong did not want to simply fill in the existing openings or build new walls to straightforwardly replace the old, because to him this would have been a method of making rather than designing.[328] Since the designer had decided to have a big exhibition hall in the middle of the steel shelf, there would have

[328] Yugan Dong (2013), "Image and Setting – Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing" "意象与场景 – 北京红砖美术馆设计", *Time+Architecture*, 2013 (2), pp. 65–70, p. 65.

p. 65.

been a 5-metre-wide corridor between the existing exterior wall and the hall. However, 5 metres is not enough for displaying artistic works which are more than 5 metres high: according to experience, the ideal distance for viewing an art work is 1.2 to 2 times as far away as the height of the work. Therefore, a contradiction arose, because if the designer had simply compressed the middle exhibition hall to make enough room for the corridor, it would reduce the space for main exhibition works. The corridor and the middle hall were fighting for enough space. Finally, the designer worked out a solution to these problems without changing anything of the existing exterior walls.

A series of right-angled triangles were applied, zigzagging through existing openings. The legs of the triangles meet both outside and inside the existing walls. As the legs of all triangles leaned against the edges of the walls between the large openings, they formed triangular chambers in the corridor enclosed by legs and existing walls, which perfectly wrapped up steel columns and water pipes next to existing walls. Triangular spaces were also formed among the legs and existing openings, which would serve as display spaces. However, these were not the only benefits offered by the zigzag triangular walls; more benefits were generated unexpectedly. First, the displaying space in each existing opening area was doubled by adding the triangles, compared with simply adding flat walls to fill in existing openings. This benefit was especially important for an exhibition building. Second, the triangular spaces repetitively appear along the corridor, providing a better interior spatial experience than flat walls. Triangular spaces help both to maintain the visual continuity of the corridor and to keep individual triangular spaces semi-independent. Third, the triangular walls expanded the sight distance of the corridor from 5 metres to nearly 7 metres, which meets the standard for a good exhibition space and gives rise to a comfortable bodily experience. Fourth, the triangular displaying spaces provided sufficient room for skylights. These could be installed on flat roofs over the displaying spaces, which would then be invisible from outside, instead of cutting openings on exterior walls. Usually, the skylights alone are able to function well for exhibitions without the assistance of artificial lights.[329]

[329] Dong, *Broken Walls and Ruins*, p. 24.

The existing walls and the series of openings were retained completely and made use of. The old walls between the openings were retained as exterior walls, and at the same time played a role together with legs of the triangles in forming triangular chambers to cover steel columns and water pipes. The newly built zigzagging walls, going back and forth through the openings, left the existing exterior walls unaltered, but generated more exhibition space, greater sight distance and better light quality, as well as a better spatial experience. All of these represent the idea of "following rather than altering the object's original features". The renovation relied on the conditions of the old materials while aiming to meet the requirements of an exhibition building, but at the same time unexpected benefits were achieved. It seems the aim of resolving a pragmatic problem sometimes acts as a starting point, but that as a scheme proceeds, some more advantages might come up. These advantages may all depend on one small renovation. If one renovation is implemented and more advantages are brought about, this renovation might be a genius approach, one that achieves "twice the yield, half the work". The interaction between old walls and new zigzag walls in the Red Brick Art Museum seems analogous to the interaction between Yin and Yang. The existing wall is Yin while the newly built wall is Yang. Images of the new building were generated based on the existing conditions as well as on the aim of matching these existing conditions. The function of interaction is to generate, such that the interaction between old and new walls means to generate new things and thus "twice the yield" was generated and simultaneously the new building façade was formed.

The form of the façade was not designed in advance to meet visual expectations before engaging with pragmatic problems. Rather, it was formed through practically dealing with particular problems in the temporal circumstances. The form is reasonable only in this case, and cannot be borrowed or applied in any other cases, since it is the product of the interaction between this particular circumstance and the architect's imagination. The form of the façade did not follow any abstract self-generated concept, but rather followed a design method of "following rather than altering the object's original features", "making the vessel by virtue of the shape of the material", originating from the most ancient idea of Yin–Yang interaction. The generation of the façade relied on a design concept that was borrowed by the architect from

the traditional philosophy of Yin and Yang. This design concept focuses on pragmatically resolving concrete problems in specific cases throughout the design; thereby, the form of the façade in this case was the consequence of the design process.

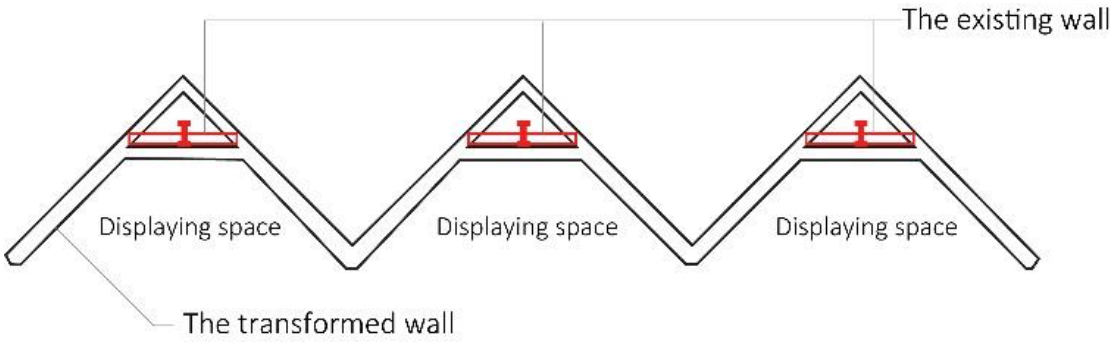


Figure 65. Idea of the transformation of exterior walls.

Figure 66. Exterior wall of Red Brick Art Museum.

- *Square Hall and Circular Hall*

Through the main east entrance, there is a main foyer area which presented the most complicated design requirement: a public welfare hall (the Square Hall), a press conference room for temporary exhibitions (the Circular Hall), a small lecture hall for meetings and

presentations, a bar and a reception room. There is also a loft over the main entrance foyer for an office or an assistant's use. Generally, within this 9-metre-high steel shelter, there were two ways to win more space: digging down to create lower space and expanding into the upper space.[330] Renovation sometimes relies on the existing shelter, which here was the precondition of the art museum's renovation. Sometimes renovation takes place on the basis of the overlapping of multiple images of settings, hoping to achieve "twice the yield" with "half the work".[331]

The small lecture hall required artificial light and good soundproofing, such that it was better to put it underground. It sinks 3 metres below the ground. Because of the strong resistance of underground water, this was the lowest level it could reach. But the architect was concerned that a 3-metre clearance height was not enough for a lecture hall and therefore he decided to set the ceiling on the 1.2-metre-high crossing beams; thereby, the ceiling was elevated to 1.2 metres above the ground level. After paving with red bricks over the beams, this arresting 1.44-metre-high platform was well suited as a stage for performance. Hence, the architect aimed to make this brick-piled platform function as a displaying stage for the public welfare hall as well as a huge stair or landing linking the ground floor and the loft.[332] As the public welfare hall is shaped like a square, it was simply called the Square Hall.

However, as the platform was at a height of 1.44 metres above the ground floor, it raised the question of how to attract visitors and induce them to go up to the exhibition stage. Dong notes a phenomenon whereby visitors are apt to be attracted by previous visitors.[333] However, it is hard for exhibition spaces to benefit from this phenomenon, since art works are usually displayed in completely closed spaces, which blocks sight when coming from outside. Therefore, opening up the closed exhibition wall to enable sight communication was considered to be a good solution. Instead of piling up bricks all the way from the foot to the

[330] Dong, *Heaven and Paradise*, p. 101.

[331] Dong, "Image and Setting", p. 64.

[332] Dong, *Broken Walls and Ruins*, p.28.

[333] Ibid., p. 30.

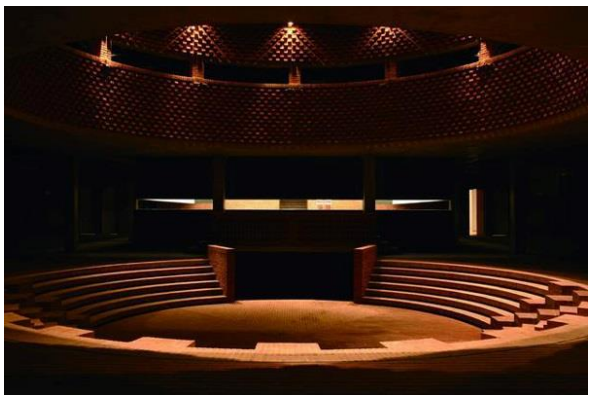
top, the wall was suspended over the platform, leaving a continuous horizontal slot all around the platform, exactly at eye-level for visitors standing on the ground floor. This horizontal slot ingeniously eliminated the closure of the Square Hall and made room for sight interaction between the Square Hall and the main foyer. The final decision for the height of the slot was 40 cm, as this was the maximum height of the slot without guardrails. Once visitors access the Square Hall, it is interesting to see moving feet through the 40-cm-high slot between the wall and the platform in the main foyer, which draws attention and attracts visitors' interest in going up to the Square Hall.

How to access the lecture hall from the main foyer turned out to be another question. A space was created in the middle of the main foyer which sinks to 1.26 metres below the ground floor level, leading to the lecture hall 3 metres underneath. The sinking Circular Hall is enveloped by a circular wall at the loft level and is illuminated by natural light through the roof and through the hollow surrounded by the circular wall.[334] This sinking space functions as a press conference room and a space for temporary exhibitions. The steps going to the bottom are in random order, and can be used for seating, relaxing or as a children's playground. Opposite these random steps, there is a brick-piled rostrum next to the Square Hall, 0.9 metres higher than the ground floor. The space between the heightened rostrum and the lowered Circular Hall is enough for people to access the small lecture hall hidden underneath the Square Hall. Thus, the sinking space also functions as a big stair landing linking the ground floor to the small lecture hall.

It seems the architect did not attempt to think about the scheme from a macro-perspective, but rather focused on problems one by one and provided solutions according to temporary circumstances in the process, before at last reaching the final form of the interior space. The requirements for artificial light and sound insulation for the small lecture hall led to the first solution – that is, putting the room 3 metres below the ground floor. After putting the lecture hall underground, another problem was encountered of insufficient clear height. However, after the ceiling of the lecture hall was raised, this in turn caused access difficulty for the

[334] Ibid., p. 32.

Square Hall; thus, a suspended wall was required to resolve the problem. Access to the small report wall was required from the main foyer, such that a sinking space was required to serve as a stair landing. However, the sinking space was expanded and shaped as a circle, and functionally became a press conference area, as well as a cafe when it is available. The challenges the architect came across during the design updated the design process itself; each solution to a certain problem generated new problems and new opportunities. The architect, all the time, took the latest circumstances into consideration in the design. Therefore, the imagery conceived in the architect's mind was changing to match the changing circumstances throughout the design process; and the form of the interior space kept changing with the change in the images, until all problems were solved. The concept of the design was to seek out problems that existed in the current circumstances, and work out solutions based on opportunities that also resided in the prevalent circumstances. In addition, each solution has two or more roles. The platform of the Square Hall functions as the ceiling of the small lecture hall and the linkage between the loft level and the ground floor, besides acting as a public welfare exhibition space. Similarly, the Circular Hall is a place for press conferences, and is also a linkage between the small lecture hall and the ground floor, a public rest area, and occasionally a cafe. These multi-functional solutions, again, point to the principle of "twice the yield, half the work".

 (a)


(b)

Figure 67. Circular Hall in Red Brick Art Museum.

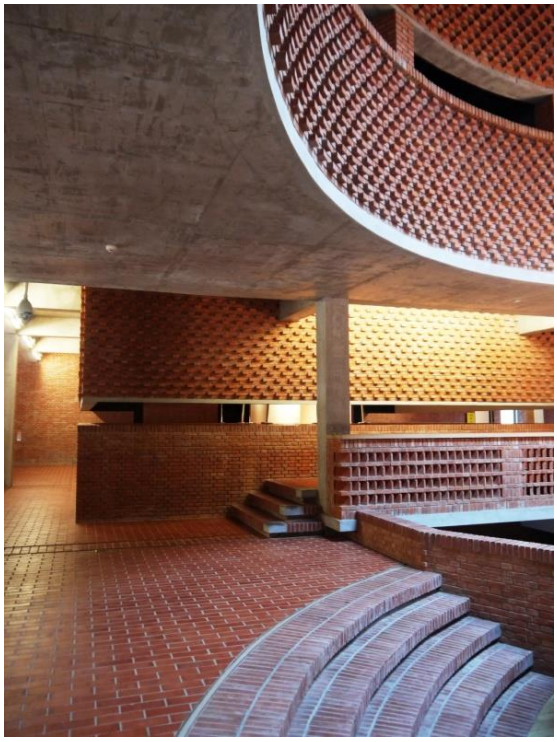


Figure 68. Circular Hall and Square Hall in Red Brick Art Museum.

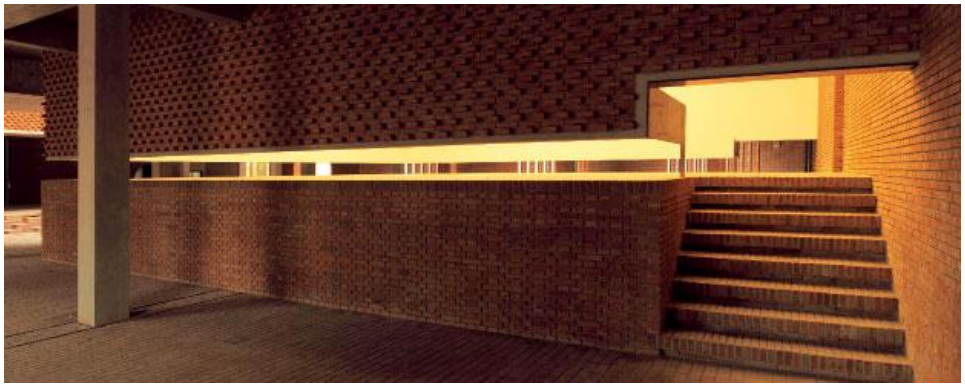


Figure 69. Square Hall in Red Brick Art Museum .

- *Church courtyard*

There is plenty of open space north of the museum. This is also a part of the project, including a small, narrow space on the northeast side and a bigger square space on the northwest side. Landscape designers are involved in the design: they started to work on this space in 2008, and construction is still ongoing.

The design of this large courtyard north of the museum also relies on "following rather than altering the object's original features". The design of each object tends to approach certain imagery according to the existing situation. The imagery refers either to the experience of touring around landscapes or to the intention to resolve real problems. Dong criticises the museum for its over-closed appearance, which he partly attributes to the separated phases of design of the courtyard and the building – the courtyard design came second to the building design. Dong thinks the opportunity to establish good interaction between building and courtyard has been missed.[335] Therefore, when he started out to design the courtyard, he tried to take other references as starting points than the building itself.

The middle courtyard is a small area northeast of the building, connecting the large northwest garden and the art museum. It is a narrow space but required to have a 4-metre-wide fire lane and a 12×12–metre turnaround for a fire engine, according to the fire safety norms. The architect started by looking for solutions to meet fire safety requirements. The 4-metre-wide fire lane could possibly be put outside, along the north exterior wall, while the 12×12-metre space for the fire engine could be placed at the east end of the lane. However, the east–west fire lane rendered the rest of this narrow place much narrower. Thus, narrowness became a strong characteristic of this place. The architect took this character as "the object's original feature", attempting to follow and reinforce the sense of narrowness rather than altering this feature.

[335] Ibid., p.38.

The basilica plan attracted the architect's interest, since the sense of narrowness it expressed could be possibly adapted to the current character. Hence, a small church courtyard placed north of the fire lane was conceived. As Dong explained, some years ago, he designed a church but did not have the chance to build it. This time, he found that it was a good opportunity to put the scheme into practice.[336] Therefore, he put the basilica church in the remaining narrow space. However, because constructing buildings other than the museum was not allowed, the roof of the church was removed and the walls were left, creating an east–west church-like courtyard. A circular shrine was designed at the east end of the church, but a wisteria was enshrined there instead of an idol or a cross. At the west end of the church, opposite the shrine, a 6-metre-high wall was set up. Standing right in front of the high wall, a cross was displayed. The cross was shaped by drawing selected bricks out of the wall; when the observer stands directly opposite the wall when the light comes through from behind it, the hollow cross is revealed completely. According to Dong, the cross was intended to maintain the image of the church, as a compensation for the loss of the roof.[337]

[336] Ibid., p. 40.

[337] Ibid., p. 41.

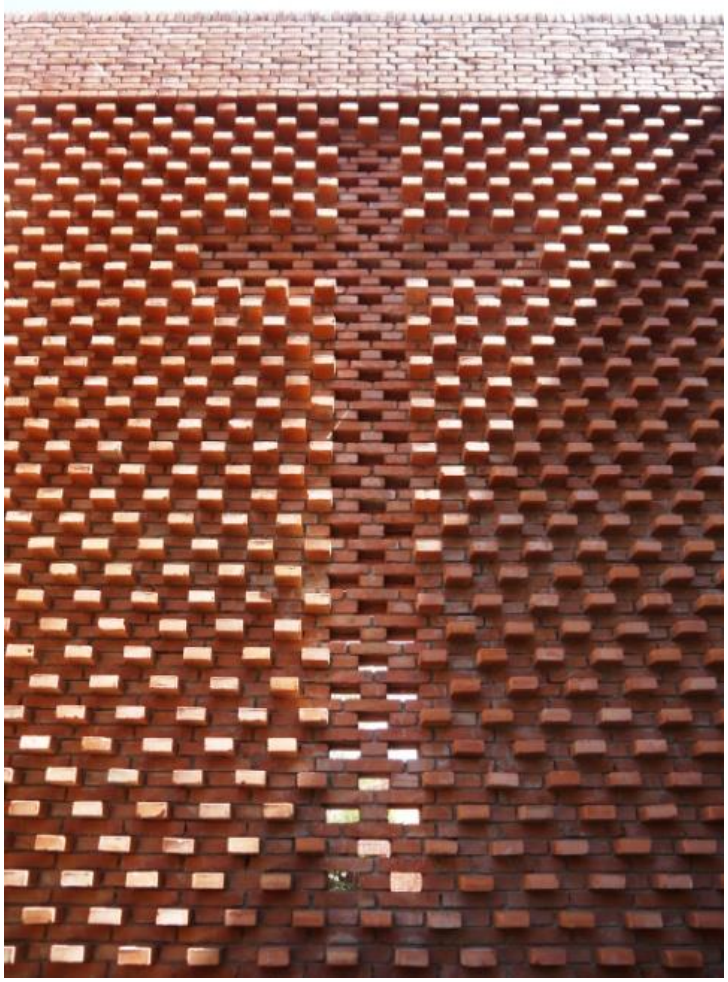


Figure 70. Cross wall of the church courtyard.

Figure 71. Church courtyard.

This courtyard occasionally serves as an outdoor cafe, as an accessory to the indoor one. There are a number of foreigners living nearby; therefore, the idea of a basilica-style

courtyard was also a means of attracting more foreign visitors. To reduce the sense of inhumanity of the church, the walls were set at only 3.3 metres' height, and brick tables were added to window sills – so the windows are not only for viewing, but are also usable. In addition, the basilica-style courtyard is planted with big trees, so that trees are visible from outside through the windows, and the trees also help to shade the cafe better during the summer.

Brick tables on the window sills to the south were planned to be used as displaying tables for sculptures. Opposite the south wall across the fire lane, the areas between the triangular masses outside the north exterior wall of the museum were earmarked for the planting of more trees, set in a series of square tree grates. These tree grates could also be used as displaying tables for sculptures. Two rows of displayed sculptures along the two sides of the fire lane were expected to achieve an image of an open-air sculpture gallery, but unfortunately the tree grates have been removed and the image of the gallery is partly lost.

Therefore, there is nothing generated absolutely by itself, but all works in compliance with the conditions at that moment. The architect took the fire safety requirements as a starting point and the fire lane further increases the sense of narrowness of the existing narrow space. Thus, the architect put this spatial character to use by adding a basilica-style courtyard. On the one hand, the basilica plan was properly adapted to this narrow and long space; on the other hand, the basilica spatial form expresses and reinforces the original character of the space. But, as no other building was allowed to be built beside the museum, the roof was removed and it became a basilica-style courtyard; following this, a cross was designed in the high brick wall in order to maintain the sense of a church. This non-roofed church was then planned to be an ideal place for outdoor cafe. As a result of being a cafe in everyday use, the symbolic character of the church has been erased, and the architect has increased the sense of liveness by virtue of plants and human-scale brick furniture. Finally, the architect found the possibility of achieving the impression of a sculpture gallery with the help of brick tables and tree grates on the other side. As with the museum space, the architect's creation was generated on the basis of previous creations, each step being determined according to circumstances at that moment. The creation is updated as the temporal circumstances

change. Any creation is not an independent entity, but rather the existence of everything is interpreted and justified by others who shape it.

- *Redesign of church courtyard*

However, the building-like courtyard ultimately aroused the client's desire to convert it into an extra lecture hall, to resolve the problem of a lack of report spaces in the museum. Hence, in 2014, a transformation project around the roof of the church was begun. Solutions for this transformation also relied on the current circumstances offered by the previous design, rather than creating something completely new. According to Dong, the transformation is not about an individual building only, but about the linkage between the spaces around the church. He plans to take the newly added roof as an intermediary, to link the loft level of the museum, the water tower at the west end of the church and the small garden at the east side of the church. A bridge has been set to go across the loft level of the museum to the east end of the roof of the church, winding down to the small garden at the east side of the church.[338] Another bridge, at the west end of the church, links the water tower and a secluded narrow path attached to the museum's exterior wall leading to the ground level. The two bridges are connected by the walkable roof over the former church courtyard.

The V-shaped roof results from multi-functional considerations. On the one hand, as the roof serves as the connection between the water tower and the loft level of the museum, there needed to be a flat path across from the west end to the east end of the roof. The valley created by the V shape offers the opportunity to accommodate a path. On the other hand, the V-shaped beams not only support the roof as structural frames, but also allow natural light into the lecture hall through the space between the beams at the top of the side walls.

Though the courtyard has been transformed into a building, the transformation project has still followed the rule of making best use of existing conditions and deriving the most benefit possible.

[338] Dong, *Heaven and Paradise*, p. 105.

Figure 72. Transformed church courtyard: a small lecture hall.

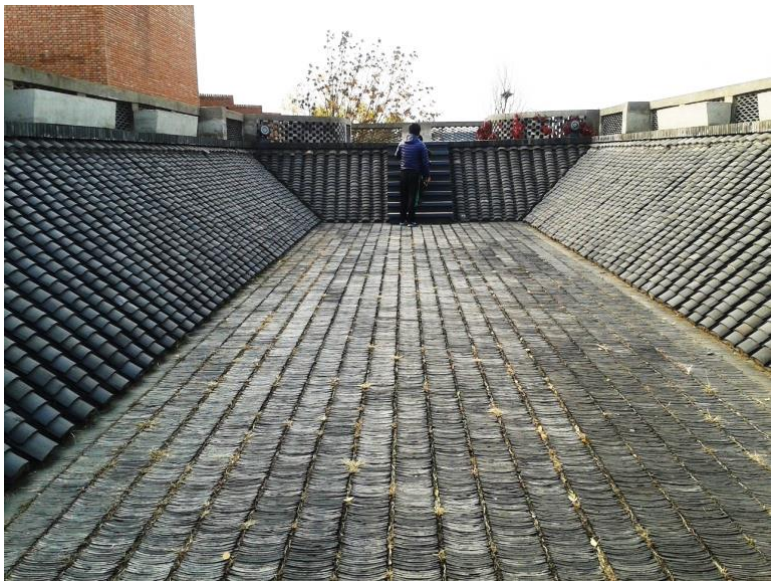


Figure 73. Newly-built V-shaped roof above the lecture hall.

Figure 74. Bridge connecting the museum and the roof of the previous church courtyard.

- *Management of nine rocks*

A big open space, 6,000 square metres in size, is located northwest of the museum. Here, the architect followed the idea of incorporating the landscape into artificial design, attempting to achieve an imagery of the landscape in an artificial space. To build a garden inside an urban area, the first step is to create an imagery of water and mountain on different levels; then attention turns to the management of the relationship between buildings and landscape.[339] As there was no building required to be built in the northern garden, the only task was to create a landscape. Earth was removed to form a lake, while a hill was piled up using the earth which had been excavated. A walkable roof was set at the top of the hill, so that the northern mountain views would be drawn into the garden. It is impossible to illustrate every detail of the creation of this sizeable garden; however, typical of its imagery are nine rocks which were collected by the architect from a stone factory and which have been carefully placed in appropriate places in the garden. The management of these nine rocks illustrates how objects have been matched with the images that the architect conceived in his mind.

A stone courtyard was built in the middle of the garden, north of the lake and south of the

[339] Dong, "Designing according to Circumstances", p. 51.

artificially created hill. The architect divided this courtyard into three adjacent sub-yards from east to west. These three yards are individually enclosed by dark grey brick walls, but are connected via openings in the walls. The architect's intention was to accommodate three different themes in three sub-yards – water, mountain and forest. The three different themes are visible from the lakeside through a round opening in the south wall of each of the three sub-yards.

In the east sub-yard, the architect intended to place a rock with water wave patterns to imply the theme of water. Since the rock which matched this condition was too big to be placed in the yard, the rock is embedded in the wall itself, protruding towards the lake. Thus it looks as if there is a waterfall on the wall. An elephant-like rock is placed in the east yard as well, but standing against the north wall in order to block sight towards the north concrete retaining wall of the artificial hill. Another two small rocks are also placed at either side of the elephant-like rock to assistance it in blocking part of the view towards the concrete retaining wall.

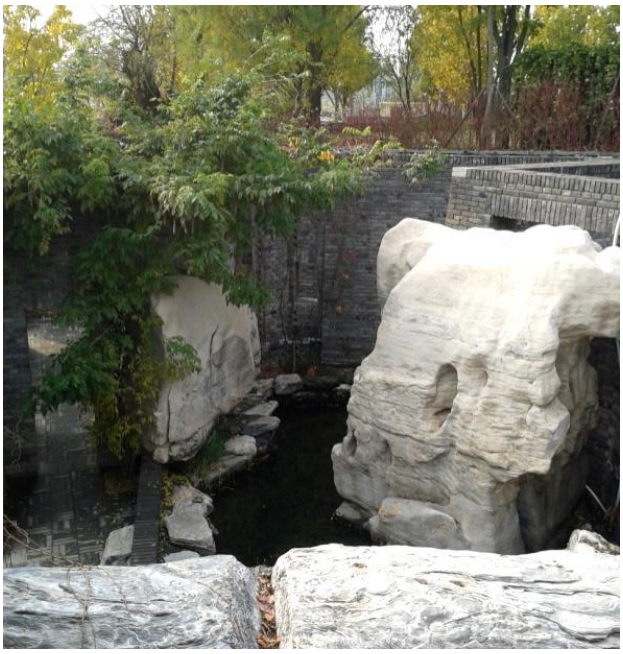


Figure 75. The second, elephant-like rock.

The fifth rock, in the middle yard, seems to imitate the image of a mountain. The rock, shaped like three peaks on top, was placed against the north wall right opposite the round opening towards the lake.

Figure 76. The fifth, three-peak rock.

A camber-shaped rock with a hollow in it is placed in the west yard, with the aim of expressing the theme of forest. The hollow, the rock and the brick wall behind it have vines planted around them, with the intention that they will become entwined as the grow, so as to present the imagery of a forest. Another, cloud-like rock is set up in front of the camber-shaped rock, and a secluded space is thereby formed between the two rocks, and this space is intended for a private chatting area.

Figure 77. The seventh, cloud-like rock.

The eighth rock has been placed in the middle of the lake, echoing the imagery of an island. It can accommodate four or five people having a conversation on it, having an extremely flat and spacious surface with an area of 7–8 square metres.

Figure 78. The eighth, island rock.

The last rock is huge and thin, shaped like a wallboard, prompting the architect to place it at the bank of the lake, corresponding to the imagery of a standing cliff beside water such as is often depicted in Chinese paintings.[340]

4.2.3 Summary

Red Brick Art Museum follows Bai Juyi's two requirements for the craftsman's design concept, "follow rather than alter the object's original features" and "twice the yield, half the work". The object's "original features" in this design refers to existing exterior walls with successive large openings, spacious interior space under a steel shelter, the scale of the open-air space, the function and safety requirements as a museum, the client's preferences, the surrounding buildings and landscape, the materials available locally, and any changes to all of these circumstances over the course of the design process. The object's "original features" helped the architect to construct possible imagery for the new space of the museum, and thus the original features served as a standing base and gave possible justifications for aspects of the design, thereby rendering it reasonable and reliable. "Twice the yield, half the work" reflects pragmatic idea of looking towards usefulness and practical benefit. "Twice the yield" in the design is reflected by the multi-purpose character of new walls, the heightened Square Hall, the lowered Circular Hall, the roof added to the church courtyard and so on. These multi-purpose solutions resulted from the need to solve certain problems, but when new forms were generated, the architect realised that they could be used for other purposes. The creation follows the original features of existing objects, instead of being worked out from nothing, such that "twice the yield, half the work" can also be realised: existing objects are being used and a new thing is being created at the same time.

The architect had neither definite intentions nor a macro-scope for the design. What he had was an idea of an approach to creating objects. The forms of the buildings and gardens generated this way are a consequence of existing circumstances, which is what the pragmatic

[340] Dong, *Broken Walls and Ruins*, p. 47–49.

approach is fundamentally supposed to be. Based on circumstances, with the designer's intelligence, the consequences will be realised as the result of the matching of subjective imaginery and objective circumstances. Therefore, the consequences of this process is that real problems are resolved step by step and the intended imagery is achieved at the same time. The building form, as the ultimate consequence of the design, is not the purpose of the design, but is something resulting from the effort to cope with existing conditions. Building form does not imply any symbolic or iconic meaning; the form represents the substance of the building itself. Thus, form does not perform as a sign translated from another sign and signifying any information other than physical functions and bodily perceptions, and is an "ultimate logical interpretant" that grows out of and interprets the context, essentially responding to the problems without passing problems along to another sign. What we see in the building is exactly what the building is.

Pragmatic aesthetics resides in the design, in the dynamic process of the architect's creation. Pragmatists do not tend to give linguistic definition or conception to anything, but instead aim to find ways to realise things in practice. Similarly, the design concept of the building is neither focused on intended visual effect, nor does it aim for any supposed particular result in advance. Rather, it embodies an attitude of orientation in how it seeks to move the design forward. Therefore, at some point it meets the ideas of pragmatism, thus allowing pragmatic concerns to be engaged with "conceptual meaning". The particular building form comes out at the end of the design, after the concept has been fully delivered and actual problems have been resolved according to particular circumstances throughout the design process. Moreover, the *I-Ching* and pragmatism both entail the belief that things are always changing afresh, and do not have a singular truth. The design concept of Red Brick Art Museum manifests this idea by concerning itself with the constantly changeable circumstances encountered throughout the design and their effects on solutions. Each step of the design is about finding out a mean, a balanced solution according to the existing circumstances, so that the building form develops through a course of seeking means.

As the building form serves as a consequence, without any visual purpose set up at the beginning, Red Brick Art Museum could be a case of what Christopher Alexander calls

"carefree and innocent" design. The innocence will only arise when people honestly forget themselves. When a designer sets out to create a design from a void without having any exact purpose in mind in the sense of ambitious concepts and willful images, does not care what shape the finished building has, does not care what other people think of it, and is not afraid of being laughed at for their ignorance about "art", the building will be shaped freely, like plants freely growing in a wild field. Most places are not innocent, such as iconic buildings, mass-produced residential developments, even the seemingly old-fashioned "regionalism" buildings, because they are made with strong outward purpose. The people who made those buildings were trying to convey something intentionally, a sort of constructed "meaning" or image, through the building form. These buildings are designed from the outside in, and although some are made to be seen as "natural", this is, in the end, a pose.[341] If a designer's mind is full of concepts and purposes, he or she relies too much on those unreal thoughts – styles, symbols, fashions – and cannot see the world directly through his or her most primitive sensations, and thus does not understand the reality. The timeless attitude to building that Alexander indicates is about a design approach that transcends styles, concepts and existing architectural languages, and aims for buildings with the most apposite forms that grow out of a particular situation. The forms come into being as the designer feels they should in response to current circumstances – for instance, there should be a path going along a stream so that we can walk by the stream in the evening, then it is better to have steps down to the water to make the stream more intimate to us, and there should be a patio right beside a big tree for stationary activities. The building form of Red Brick Art Museum comes into being through the same approach: step by step, according to the events that will happen in the museum and the conditions of the old factory. The building can be timelessly alive only when the designer is egoless towards the finished forms.

The "conceptual meaning" of the museum is generated by the architect, from his encounter with the traditional way of creating art works, following rather than altering the object's original features. The concept is from a traditional notion that is widely applied in the creation

[341] Christopher Alexander (1979), *The Timeless Way of Building*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 531–546.

of arts and crafts. The “conceptual meaning” the architect has created is about a pragmatic approach to craftsmanship, a method of dealing with concrete problems rather than an overarching ambition with clear intentions regarding eventual forms.

The architect believes in the notion that when Yin and Yang interact, a new thing will be born. The existing circumstances and the imagery conceived in the architect’s mind are matched as a Yin–Yang unit. When a particular circumstance meets a suitable image, they will soon become matched and a proper solution will be worked out, and thus a new creation will be generated. As the circumstances are updated, the design work proceeds, and the final form is shaped. Echoing the principle that there is nothing absolutely Yin or absolutely Yang but that things are both Yin and Yang, in Red Brick Art Museum one object always tends to have two or more characters, such as the roof of the church courtyard which also serves as a high walkway; the platform of the Square Hall which also serves as the roof of the lecture hall below it, a stage for exhibitions and a stair landing for the upper floor; or the zigzagging walls which are intended to expand watching distance between art works and viewers, but which are also designed so as to cover old water pipes, divide individual displaying spaces and allow natural light in without the need to cut openings in the exterior walls.

4.3 Traditional Chinese Philosophies in Design: Creating the Poetry

The poetry lies in feelings or moods generated by bodily senses when one places oneself in a certain environment. For a long time the body has played a vital role in Chinese philosophy and art. Chinese philosophy is rooted in the understanding of everything perceived by the body, and Chinese art lays much emphasis on the relationship between the body and landscape. The design of the Xiangshan Campus explains the way in which Chinese literary architects pursue the poetry of everyday life – a design concept which tries to achieve an “aesthetic sense”. This sense needs to be gained through the body’s perceptions in daily life rather than understood only through abstract ideas.

The design of Xiangshan Campus is a good example reflecting the idea of pragmatic aesthetics. Pragmatic aesthetics lies in the dynamical method of creating spaces and the aesthetic

experience of perceiving them, rather than making linguistic concepts or definitions. Pragmatic aesthetics requires us to emphasise bodily perceptions, the cultivation and the use of the body and, through it, consciousness. What the architect did was to design the aesthetic experience – a series of bodily perceptions and the spaces that would generate these perceptions – and hope people would realise it in actual experience. The purpose of this example is to present the way the architect through about the design – how he approached "aesthetic sense" by dealing with the relationship between buildings and natural environment, considering the body's movement through the spaces, using regional materials and so on. Before moving on to discuss the example in detail, I will briefly discuss somaesthetics and the emphasis on the body in Chinese culture.

4.3.1 Concerns about the body

In Galen Cranz's essay "Somatics and Aesthetics", he cites Alexander Baumgarten's definition of aesthetics as a "general theory of sensory knowledge", a logic theory constructed on the basis of direct sensation.[342] He also refers to Terry Eagleton's view of aesthetics – the basis of aesthetics as emotions, which serve as guides between pure sensation and action, directing us towards or away from a stimulus. Aesthetics is recognised as being associated with the bodily sense. Richard Shusterman introduces the term "somaesthetics"; though it is a familiar term in neurophysiology referring to sensory perception through the body, Shusterman proposes it from a philosophical perspective, attempting to describe the term as it relates to "how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthetics) and creative self-fashioning". The term "soma" indicates a sentient body, actively producing feelings, emotions and sensations, while the term "aesthetics" gives "soma" a conscious sense of bodily perception; thus, "somaesthetics" comprises both theoretical thoughts and sensuous practice.[343] The body is our most primordial tool, the most basic

[342] Galen Cranz (2013), "Somatics and Aesthetics: The Role of Body in Design", in Bhatt, R. (ed.), *Rethinking Aesthetics: The Role of Body in Design*, London: Routledge, pp. 143–157, p. 144.

[343] Richard Shusterman (2008), *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*,

medium for interacting with various environments, and a necessity for perception, action and thoughts. Our cultural identities are largely subject to the body, as the body offers our primal mode of engagement with the world, shaping our consciousness by structuring our habits, notions, interests and values towards things, and thereby determining meanings in a certain culture.

The body's role as primordial medium has long been recognised. As Shusterman points out, the basic somatic terms "organ" and "organism" derive from a Greek work for tool, "organon". [344] However, Greek philosophy's tendency to champion idealist ends while disparaging physical and material values has resulted in condemnation of rather than celebration of the body as medium, represented by Plato and subsequent idealists. Plato always argues that the body distracts us from reality, the ideal realm in his imagination, and the search for true knowledge, by interrupting our attention with sensational commotions and diverting our minds with passions, fancies and nonsense. The sensorial medium of the body disorders Plato's ideal reality through its unpredictable perceptions. As stated previously, different from Western philosophy, which has at times had strong negative attitudes towards the body and considers pure spirit as something that transcends the body, Chinese philosophy does not have a definite intellect–body dualism, but thinks that the world is an extension of the body: all understanding of the world has always originated in the observation of everyday phenomena and the experience of real life. It sees bodily senses as lenses through which to look at the world and to shape mind.

Dong asserts that all religion stems from the fear of death. In this view, religions make up stories of an immortal afterlife as a means to relieve the fear of death.[345] However, Chuang Tse offers an alternative way of coping with this fear, seeing the change of life in a wider environment with endless changes – defusing the sense of sadness and fear of the oblivion

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

[344] Ibid., p. 4.

[345] Dong, *Heaven and Paradise*, p. 31.

of death. A famous poet, Tao Yuanming,[346] has left us a fragment of a poem: "death is no big deal, as it is nothing but just like integrating body into mountain".[347] He considers death a way of transferring the body from living places to the mountain. The mountain is another home for the body after death. It is not fantasy, imagined or depicted by the human mind, but a real everyday environment which can be perceived when we are alive. Therefore, the wider environment, to Chinese people, is of vital importance. It could be a paradise offering people pleasure when they are alive, and it could be a home in which to house the dead body as well as to soothe the pessimistic mood of death. Another of Tao Yuanming's poems, "Peach Blossom Spring", describes his imagined experience in an attractive country field. His experience is not abstractly out of life, but derives from everyday life experience. He describes how his body moves through spaces and his feelings change all the way through the journey, and at the end he is fully enchanted in the charming field and almost escapes from the sadness and the fear of matters of life. Tao's way of forgetting death is about simply immersing the body in wider environmental spaces and freely exploring everything enjoyable and aesthetic with the sensitive body, thereby getting rid of the dread associated with issues of life and death. As a result, different from the religious approach, which needs the help of redemption in the afterlife to resist the fear of this life, Tao's approach is about forgetting the fear of death by closely encountering the environment with the help of the body's senses, and thus perceiving the poetic beauty of the environment and temporarily fleeing from daily trivia.

"Peach Blossom Spring" depicts an imagined "perceptual space" in which a series of scenes can be perceived with the movement of the body, and this kind of space also exists in real life. The perceptual space is "a space of action centred on immediate needs and practices", which cannot be separated from bodily experience and intentions. The perceptual space has a

[346] Tao Yuanming (365–427 AD) was a Chinese poet who lived in the middle of the Six Dynasties period (220–589 AD). Tao is often regarded as the greatest poet, and particularly as a "Fields and Gardens" poetry poet: that is, a poet of naturalism, but a poet of the more domestic sort of naturalism.

[347] Yuanming Tao (1979), *The Collection of Tao Yuanming 陶渊明集*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company Press, p. 142.

centre, the perceiving body, from which the space can be constructed.[348] The structure of the perceptual space cannot be understood as a measurable object, but rather has to be experienced as a sort of sensorial generator that can have emotional effects on the body. Therefore, the perceptual space is "the most immediate form of awareness", where we may have various kinds of emotions and feelings as we encounter diverse material or immaterial matters.

The "aesthetic sense" is a kind of feeling in the realm of the perceptual space, resulting from pure bodily sensations and emotions, which usually comes from artistic images. "Aesthetic sense" has for a long time been the highest pursuit for Chinese men of letters in artistic creation, no matter whether in poetry, painting, calligraphy or gardening. It is difficult to discuss "aesthetic sense" in language; it must be sensed and experienced in the body as a consequence of exposure to certain images (or other artistic works) when one is in a suitably contemplative state of mind. "Aesthetic sense" is similar to what Peter Zumthor refers to with the term "atmosphere". When Zumthor tries to describe the quality in architecture, he refers to those buildings with beautiful and sensuous presence which are able to move him. The thing that moves him is atmosphere.[349] Similarly, "aesthetic sense" is also an emotion resulting from being moved when we confront landscape scenes or artistic works. The artist tries to encapsulate "aesthetic sense" in art by borrowing the sense of beauty from the landscape and incorporating it into the creation of art, aiming to engender an "aesthetic sense" in the people who encounter the artist's work. John Dewey has noted that artists and perceivers of art often begin with "a total seizure", "an inclusive qualitative whole … not yet articulated". This quality of an inclusive whole can only be immediately experienced.[350] A poem may begin to be formed from an emotion or perception which is at first without a clear and definite object, and the specific parts take shape later. A designer may start thinking of a project with a vague sort of "aesthetic sense" about it, and particular spaces are designed

[348] Edward C. Relph (1976), *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion, Ltd, p. 10.

[349] Peter Zumthor (2006), *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments; Surrounding Objects*, Basel, Boston & Berlin: Birkhäuser, p. 10.

[350] John Dewey (1934), *Art as Experience*, London: G. Allen & Unwin, pp. 191–192.

later on as that “aesthetic sense” becomes clearer.

“Aesthetic sense” awakened by the bodily senses is seen as poetry in everyday life. Artistic works serve as an artist’s language, representing the various ways in which the individual artist pursues “aesthetic sense”. However, the precondition of the pursuit of “aesthetic sense” is to allow the body to be engaged with space and to give the bodily senses as much freedom as possible, to allow them to obtain every bit of perception from real life. Any art requires the understanding of life in order for creative practice to be rendered achievable. What the artist has perceived or experienced in everyday life will serve as a source for the artist’s pursuit of “aesthetic sense”; this sense will be represented in the art works produced in the particular “languages” the artist prefers. The final forms of any art works present as the answers ultimately resulting from explorations of the most apposite ways of expressing “aesthetic sense”, rather than being a sign, which signifies extra meaning beyond the bodily senses in everyday life.

Figure 79. “Picture of literary garden”, Zhou Wenju, 10th century.

The relationship between the body and landscape can be found in Chinese paintings. A painting called “Picture of literary garden” depicts the ideal life of poets in the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907).[351] In this painting, there is no house or other living construction; the only

[351] Dong, *Heaven and Paradise*, p. 127.

objects are rocks and a bent pine tree. The artist outlines an image of a sense of living by virtue of associating the body with the rocks and the tree. The bent tree acts as a handrail, upon which a standing man relies. The higher main rock serves as a desk for painting, while the lower rock next to it is used as a bar on which to set the ink slab, and the broad flat rock is used for sitting. All of these objects are made best use of, as if they are furniture. Landscapes, thereby, become a large-scale liveable house where everyday life takes place.

Guo Xi, a Chinese landscape painter who lived during the Northern Song dynasty (AD 960–1127), provides four principles in reference to the body–landscape relationship in Chinese paintings; these are: walkable, watchable, liveable and visitable.[352] These four principles are established on the basis of bodily senses. To be walkable means the spaces presented in paintings ought to be on a human scale, thus enabling the body to move through them smoothly. To be watchable requires beautiful views, such that the paintings will be attractive and the body will feel enjoyment. To be liveable suggests that the painting offers potential pleasant places to live. The quality of being visitable generally refers to places where the poetic scenery is varied and changes with the movement of the body. Through these four principles, places can be depicted which would bring constant surprise and joy and in which the body might stay longer. Tang Bohu's painting shows an image of a reclusive inhabitation in a mountain forest, implying an idea of harmony between the landscape and living activities. Chou Ying's painting also depicts a scene showing how bodies are involved in landscapes. "Aesthetic sense" is caused by the landscape elements and the life in the landscapes. Only if we appreciate a painting by projecting our own body into the image, as if we were in the painting, can we gain as much pleasure as possible and find the art work's "aesthetic sense".

Figure 80. Tang Bohu's painting, early 16th century.

[352] Ibid., p. 39.

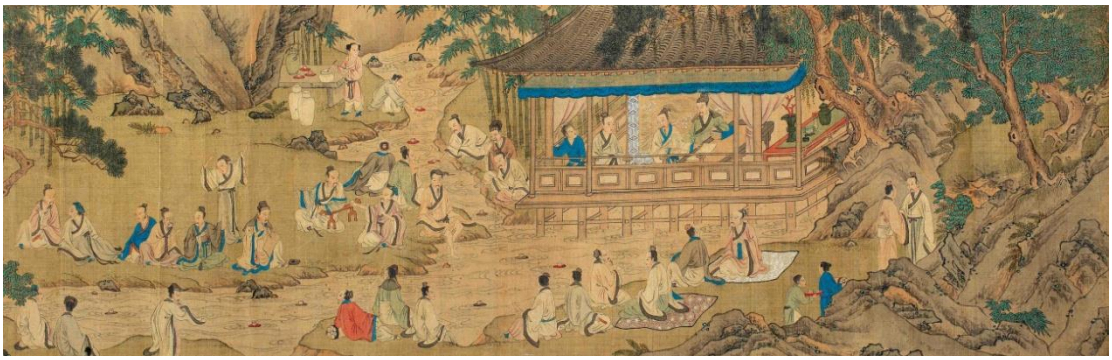


Figure 81. Chou Ying's painting, 16th century.

Guo Xi's four principles have also been brought into gardening in the city context. The poetic beauty of landscapes is thereby transferred into city life. As traditional houses usually have courtyards embedded in buildings, daily activities and landscapes are successfully merged in houses; the body is allowed to access landscapes, so that vision, hearing, smell, taste and tactile sense are all motivated in such a way as to bond the body with the landscape, instead of allowing vision alone to be engaged with the landscape. Because of the involvement of all bodily senses in everyday city life, a mental picture of a walkable, watchable, liveable and visitable city can be generated.

Architectural design is subject to the effort to achieve living experiences. This effort echoes the pragmatist's idea that architecture ought to be a living art rather than an "art for art's sake". Architecture should rather perform as a place for everyday experience, as part of life. Under the pursuit of the poetry of everyday life, the design concept turns out to be a design of bodily experiences, feelings and perceptions, which comes from the body and directs attention to the "aesthetic sense". In this sense, "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" are integrated – "conceptual meaning" is a pragmatic way of designing for everyday life, and "pragmatic meaning" is hoped to be produced once the bodily experience envisaged in the concept is actually achieved.

4.3.2 The poetry in architectural design

Wang Shu is an architect who is working on translating the poetic beauty of the landscape into the built environment of everyday life to achieve poetic aesthetics in living spaces. He

brings to his work a literate mindset, seeking poetic aesthetics from traditional arts and craftsmanship, as well as the relationship between the built environment and the landscape in traditional architecture. Wang's architectural language comes primarily from the picturesque and "aesthetic sense" of Chinese paintings and Jiangnan traditional gardens. His design works are mainly attempts to express a sense of beauty such as these paintings and gardens traditionally connote. His texts help to interpret those moods or feelings he would like to attach to his design works. What he is doing is not simply attaching symbols from traditional arts and architecture to contemporary design, but rather an effort to seek an experience of what has been lost in modern life – the emotions and perceptions of everyday life and the harmonious relations between the landscape and the body that result from allowing the body to access landscapes freely. Therefore, Wang is seeking the sense of beauty and bodily feelings from traditional arts, as well as the craftsmanship and the relations with the landscape which exist in traditional architecture, and all of these motives are represented in his design works. The aesthetics transferred from traditional arts mean to arouse bodily senses and enable modern life to turn its attention to landscapes. In Wang's architectural design, landscape-approachable spatial layout, regional materials and unaffected, plain constructional techniques are repetitively applied, aiming to arouse an "aesthetic sense" which will result in the return to a simple, pure life.

One project, the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, represents Wang Shu's essential design directions – concerning bodily experience and the relationship with the landscapes. Xiangshan Campus is located in the fringes of the city of Hangzhou in the southeast of China. A small mountain called Xiang stands at the centre of the campus site. This mountain is 50 metres high, surrounded by two streams flowing from west to east passing through the foot of the northern and southern sides, respectively, and emerging into one bigger stream on the east side. Since 2000, the number of new university campuses in campus-districts has been mushrooming across China under the government's plan of developing the university sector, but China Academy of Art has not followed the prevailing trend of urban development. Artists at the China Academy of Art preferred to locate the new campus in a rural environment filled with landscapes, featuring water and a mountain,

because they believe that landscapes is more significant than the building itself, according to cultural tradition.[353] Xiang Mountain was therefore chosen as the backdrop against which to accommodate the new campus. The integration of the mountain from the very beginning set a landscape-responsive tone for the future presentations of poetry in architecture on the campus.

The new campus is located on a land area of 250,000 m^2. The first phase of project was mainly one of the development of the northern part of the site. The design began in 2001 and buildings were completed in 2004. It consists of ten buildings and two bridges, with a gross floor area of 70,000 m^2. The second phase focused on the south side of the mountain. Design for this began in 2004 and buildings were completed in 2007, consisting of ten main buildings and two accessory buildings, with a gross floor area of 80,000 m^2. Building structure types in the first phrase were reinforced concrete frame structures, steel structures, stone masonry, tile-and wood-structured walls, and whitewashed walls; in the second phrase, reinforced concrete frame structures, steel structures and brick walls played the main roles.

[353] Shu Wang & Wenyu Lu (2008), "Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art" "中国美术学院象山校区", *Architectural Journal*, 2008 (9), pp. 50–59, p. 50.

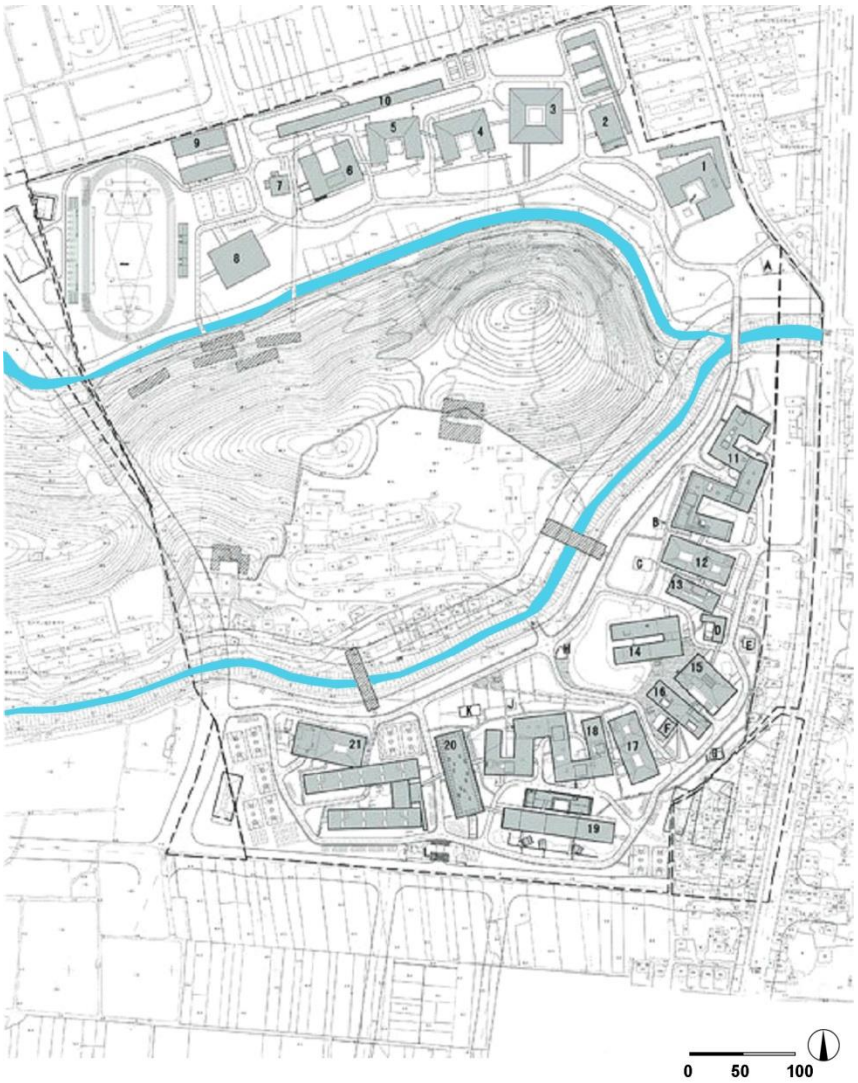


Figure 82. Masterplan of Xiangshan Campus.

- *Harmony with the mountain*

Considering issues of harmony with the landscapes, at the beginning of the first phase Wang came up against the question of how a large-scale university campus could coexist with a small pre-existing mountain. Wang explains that his initial idea came from his experience of climbing Six-harmony Pagoda.[354] Six-harmony Pagoda has a huge body but is located by a small mountain similar to Xiang Mountain. But when Wang accessed the Pagoda, the sense of the huge mass of the body of the structure immediately disappeared. There are six sides on each

[354] Ibid., p. 50.

floor, and three windows in each side. Thus in each floor there are 18 windows exactly the same as each other. Looking out through each of the windows, different views present themselves. Looking towards the Pagoda from outside, the colour echoes that of the mountain, which renders it as if it is being absorbed in the mountain. This experience gave Wang inspiration as to how to create the campus buildings in such a way to stand in a humble relationship with the mountain.

- *Countryside life*

As can be seen from the plan, all of the buildings were arranged along the fringe of the site, surrounding Xiang Mountain. The main façades of the buildings almost face the mountain, designed to be in concert with the landscape. Between the mountain and the buildings, there lies a large area of fields. Existing streams, an earth dam, farmlands and fishponds were retained intact, with only simple repair and maintenance. The fishponds were cleaned and the sludge from the pond bed was used in building construction. Weeds were planted around the ponds, which attracts the local residents to come and visit. The farmlands can be rented to local farmers. There is no rental charge for these farmlands, but users are not allowed to apply fertiliser.[355] In this project Wang Shu has attempted to seek out and structure a sense of countryside life. An image of the countryside has been conceived by leaving landscape fields to coexist with building constructions and allowing local people to interact with the farmlands. The concept of the countryside image is rooted in the Chinese tradition of the pursuit of pure and simple countryside life, especially for men of letters, such as Tao Yuanming, who created a great number of poems and paintings portraying the poetic beauty of the landscapes and idyllic countryside life. The appreciation of countryside life responds to pragmatism's denial of the dichotomy of aesthetics and asceticism. Even the simple, ascetic life has its own enjoyment and beauty. The simplicity and purity of countryside life in the design of Xiangshan Campus integrates aesthetics and asceticism. People can have aesthetic feelings by experiencing simple

[355] Ibid., p. 52.

countryside life on the campus.

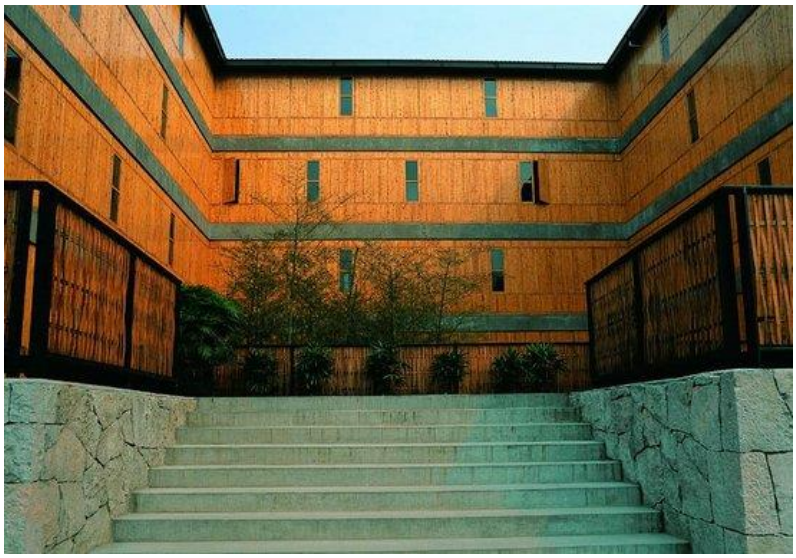


Figure 83. Courtyard (Building No. 4).

Figure 84. Courtyard: aerial view (Buildings No. 6, No. 5 and No. 4).

- *Courtyard and garden architecture*

The image of the “courtyard” acts as a motif in the first phase of the project, leading north to

Xiang Mountain. The courtyard arrangement is the most traditional and the most basic of Chinese architectural types. This project does not rigidly follow the form of a traditional courtyard, but rather it trials the idea of freestyle courtyards, which coexist but are distinct from each other.[356] Ten freestyle isomorphic but slightly different courtyards are not completely enclosed, but are designed with half-architecture and half-landscape space. Any two courtyards could be exactly the same in building form, but distinct in their orientations and their relationship with the mountain, surrounding buildings and settings. Following the basic form of the courtyard, buildings are at the same time sensitively distorted, with flexible and delicate variations, and adapted to particular terrains. The flat site has been transformed into a typical southeast hilly terrain to relieve the sense of the huge mass of individual buildings. Horizontal eaves repetitively appearing on the façades also help reinforce the horizontal tendency of the buildings, as a means of being consistent with the small mountain. Therefore, the form of the courtyard, borrowed from traditional architecture, serves as an approach to integrate the landscape and everyday life. The architect aimed to create a more comprehensive experience based on the basic form, according to different terrain conditions. Being harmonious with the mountain is the rule throughout the design. “Aesthetic sense” can be realised through outdoor plants, the flexible layout of buildings, the hilly land and the interaction between buildings and mountain. All of these bring a sense of living in half-landscape and half-architecture spaces.

The courtyard is one of the forms resulting from the intention to join architecture with the landscape. However, the state of half-landscape and half-architecture can be realised through a more general idea known as “garden architecture”, where the poetry of everyday life resides, as it does in the landscape images shown in Chinese paintings. In garden architecture, the building layout responds to the relationship between mountain and water. There is an ambiguity in the boundary between landscape and architectural spaces – water, mountain, plants and buildings are integrated and intertwined as an organic whole. A series of poetic places are generated in that organic whole. They repetitively appear as the body moves

[356] Wang & Lu, “Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art”, p. 50.

through the half-landscape, half-architecture scenery.

Figure 85. “Mountain house” (Building No. 18).

Figure 86. “Water house” a (Building No. 14).

Figure 87. "Water house" b (Building No. 14).

As Wang states, building type is a sign, and he has produced three building type patterns referring to different relations between landscape spaces and architectural spaces.[357] Each pattern represents one topology of landscape–architecture relations.[358] "Mountain house" takes the cliff temple as a reference. Wang regards the cliff temple as located at the interface between buildings and landscapes, such that the mountain house can also act as an intermediary where mountain and building constructions communicate harmoniously. "Water house" resembles waves on the water, which is a common sight in southern China, but what is more important about a water house is that it can provide more places for rambling, as well as spaces for lectures, inside and outside the buildings and even on the roof, where the body is more related to landscapes. The third pattern, "courtyard", is the one that can be most easily adapted to a built city environment. The courtyard usually requires at least three yards in one building unit, which can create quiet landscape places for tea and conversation, and the flat roof of which can be used for walking as well as for lectures. Buildings following any of these three patterns provide organic pictures of the integration of architecture and landscapes, corresponding to the relationship of Yin and Yang. The three building patterns are intended to create "aesthetic sense" not only by picturesquely presenting images but by requiring bodily

[357] Shu Wang (2002), *The Beginning of Design 设计的开始*, Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, p. 165.

[358] Wang & Lu, "Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art", p. 52.

experience between architecture and the landscape. The merging of architecture and landscape also comes from the tradition of the pursuit of harmoniously living with landscapes, which can also be found in Chinese paintings.

Figure 88. Viewing from inside.

Figure 89. Viewing from outside.

- *Viewing and being viewed*

There are two viewpoints involved in landscape design according to the location of the viewer and the object being viewed: viewing from inside and viewing from outside. These two ways of viewing originated from Chinese paintings. Viewing from inside is about seeing the views outside from inside the building, whereas viewing from outside is about viewing the buildings from positions outside, in the mountains or other places. Wang has translated the relationship of viewing and being viewed in Chinese paintings to architecture and landscaping. One place may be a good position from which to view the other places, while the same place may also

be a pleasing object to be viewed from elsewhere. Therefore, borrowing views and creating views are both important in garden architecture design.[359]

Architecture and landscape design is concerned with how to both borrow views from some other objects and create views for others. In the Xiangshan Campus, there are seemingly random and irregular openings of different sizes deliberately designed into some buildings, aiming to borrow views from the appointed landscape. Looking outwards through these openings, ingeniously predetermined pictures emerge, framed by the openings. Openings may be found anywhere around the campus. Sometimes they act as a window, sometimes as a gate and sometimes as a big hole in the wall that leaves room for a bridge to pass through. The views borrowed by these openings are various, from landscapes to building constructions, from a part of a stair to a whole building. In terms of creating views, for instance, there is a rock-like shape which repetitively appears in buildings in various forms. Sometimes, it stands as a small independent building; sometimes, it is an accessory body of a larger building; and sometimes it is a hole in the wall. People may come across these rock-like shapes occassionally in many places around the campus. So, the technique of viewing and being viewed borrowed from Chinese paintings has been extensively considered in the architectural design. Walking around the campus, views continuously present themselves in front of one's eyes, offering a sense that one is wandering in a painting with countless varied scenes.

Figure 90. Rock-like independent buildings (Building No. 19).

[359] Jie Lin & Baotong Li (2008), "Scale·Wander: Comparison of First Phase and Second Phase of Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art" "尺度·漫步: 中国美术学院象山一二期工程比较", *Interior Design and Construction*, 2008 (3), pp. 50–60. p. 52.

Figure 91. Rock-like holes in the wall (Building No. 15).

Figure 92. Rock-like accessory body (Building No. 20).

Figure 93. Passages around exterior walls (Building No. 18).

Figure 94. Passage on the roof (Expert building).

- *Path*

While the image of "courtyard" was set as a motif for the buildings north of Xiang Mountain in the first phase, in the second phase the image of "path" served as a motif for the buildings south of the mountain.[360] The path is one of the key elements in traditional gardening. Walking along elaborately designed paths, different views and spaces will be experienced within a small artificially created space, but a sense of staying within a large-scale landscape will be generated as a result of the constant shifting of varied views and spaces. In this phase, as many opportunities as possible have been created for rambling. The possibilities for rambling have been attained by creating a number of long passages running around buildings, connecting interior spaces, roofs, outdoor steps, courtyards and the waterside. For example, in Buildings No. 11 and No. 18, there are continuous long passages circling the entire buildings, linking several of their interior spaces; in Building No. 19, passages embrace two rock-like individual constructions; in Building No. 14, passages enclose a waterside open-air yard; while in Building No. 15, passages connect with an extremely secluded garden which conveys a mood of calm

[360] Lin & Li (2008), "Scale·Wander", p. 52.

introversion. These mutually interlaced objects join buildings and landscapes as a united whole. Accessing a selected entrance and walking in a chosen direction along a preferred path, a series of pictures will be presented successively and endlessly with the movement of the body. Those pictures are varied and distinct from each other: sometimes a narrow and dark interior corridor, sometimes a bright open-air garden suddenly comes into view, sometimes a dedicated architectural space, and sometimes an elegant and sensitive landscape view is presented through a window. These pictures along the path make a whole piece of journey, similar to a scroll painting made up of many small scenes. One journey is connected with another. The end of one journey is the start of another. The boundary between buildings, between buildings constructions and landscapes, becomes ambiguous; experience between spaces becomes rich and varied; rambling along the paths feels like watching a movie. Therefore, the unexpected experience obtained from the rambling journey along freely chosen paths around buildings and landscapes echoes the experience in traditional gardens and the scenes presented in Chinese paintings, which is exactly what the architect desired to achieve in this project.

Wang Shu's design of the sequence of scenes is analogic with Bernard Tschumi's filmic idea at the point that scenes change with the movement of the body. As Tshucmi describes, the linear system of Parc de la Villette acts as narrative paths made out of segments like film frames. Each frame is placed in a continuous movement. Successive frames constitute a sequence of film. The images of the film change with the movement of one's body. The sequence of the film can be slow, fast or accelerated, as one moves along a path at varying speed.[361] Individual bodies could find different ways of scenes. One can have different journeys at different times. In Parc de la Villette, one creates one's own journey as one wanders in the park. What one sees and experiences accidentally happen on one's way and this is where the pleasure comes from. The architect could neither design the exact ways one has to walk on nor exact experience one would go through, it is users who direct their own films following bodies'

[361] Bernard Tschumi, Frédéric Migayrou & Centre Georges Pompidou (2014), *Bernard Tschumi: Architecture: Concept & Notation*, Paris: Centre Pompidou, p. 136.

movement.

The possibility of rambling seems in some way associated with one of Peter Zumthor's interests in design, "between composure and seduction" – the place that makes us calm and induces us to stay, at the same time as seducing us to move around.[362] Thinking about the tension between composure and seduction is exemplified in Zumthor's Thermal Vals project: as he indicates, the most important concern in this case was to induce a sense of freedom of movement, a possibility for strolling, a mood that would seduce people rather than directing them. The paths in Xiangshan also aims to induce people into more new experiences. They are not like corridors that only direct people straightforwardly to specific destinations; they are places in which one feels a desire to stay within landscape surroundings and to explore more towards a farther end.

Figure 95. Cedar wood boards used for courtyard façade (Building No. 5).

[362] Zumthor, *Atmospheres*, p. 40.

Figure 96. Cedar wood windows on courtyard façade (Building No. 5).

- *Regional techniques and materials*

Cedar wood boards cover the courtyard-side façades, from bottom to top, of the courtyard buildings; each courtyard is surrounded by three-sided, four-floor-high cedar wood walls. These cedar wood boards serve as doors on the ground floors and as large windows on upper floors, and these doors and windows can be opened or closed as one pleases. When all boards are closed, the simple and pure façade brings a temporary sense of silence and solemnity; when some of the boards are opened randomly, it brings a sense of lightness and liveliness. Hooks and bolts for the doors and windows are all forged by a local blacksmith.

Besides regional techniques, Wang is also fond of using abandoned and regional materials and assembling them in a way that expresses their new value. Since ancient times, Chinese constructors have kept reusing recycled bricks and tiles, such that this sustainable construction method has become a convention in Chinese constructional techniques.[363] Wang follows this tradition. There are over 3 million tiles and bricks of different ages that have been collected from demolished structures and reused in the Xiangshan project. They are creatively reused in roofs, walls and pavements in new buildings.[364] This sustainable construction method has

[363] Wenqing Sun (2013), "Translation of Symbols – Taking Xiangshan Campus as an Example to Discuss Regional Characters in Wang Shu's Project" "符号的转译 – 以象山校区为例谈王澍建筑的地域性特征", *Shandong Industrial Technology*, 2013 (7), pp. 114–116, p. 116.

[364] Wang & Lu, "Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art", p. 51.

decreased costs and reflects a Chinese view of regional construction. More beneficially, this recycling technique, combinging with concrete frame structure, has resulted in an effective insulated wall and roof system.[365]

In addition, the appearance of dark grey tiles accompanied by white walls recollects traditional Chinese wash painting, especially when it is rainy; the wet tiles reflecting the sky's light provide a strong sense of poetic beauty. Regional materials, such as bamboo, have been taken into consideration. As the southeast part of China abounds in bamboo, a great deal of bamboo has been used as an architectural material. Moreover, Wang is also interested in the revival of regional techniques. He adopted the techniques of free stone masonry and rammed earth technology in the project. The lower exterior walls in some buildings are constructed with stone masonry, based on one of the construction techniques used in local tea gardens.

Figure 97. Abandoned materials reused in the new building (Building No. 16).

[365] Ibid., p. 52.

Figure 98. Bamboo is used for rail boards (Expert building).

4.3.3 Summary

As this shows, Wang Shu started from the principles of humanism and regionalism. He believes that the local materials and constructional techniques used widely have a less negative impact on the environment. Hence he chose to use these local techniques, and spread them into large-scale production. Therefore, Wang's project has transcended both the individual's creation and the engineer's profession, and has become a collective work of handcrafted construction. Construction techniques originated in traditional handcraftsmanship, but were further modified and carefully transplanted into this modern project. What those traditional techniques and tangible regional materials confer on Xiangshan Campus is about calling attention to a tactile sense and expressing a feeling of nostalgia and a desire to return to a simpler life.

Picturesque sense is also an essential point of what Wang explores in order to achieve a sense of poetry. His picturesque sense references traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy. How to draw each stroke well and organise them into the best relationship is of vital importance in Chinese painting and calligraphy. Brush strokes are varied; even different parts of a single stroke vary according to the changing mood of the artist. Wang has abstracted the beauty of the line from Chinese painting and calligraphy and practised applying this sense of beauty in his architectural project. These lines run throughout the buildings, from curved roofs, to

framed façades, to the zigzagging passages circling around buildings, and even to the randomly arranged plan as a means of adapting the hilly terrain, resembling in spirit the freewheeling strokes of painting and calligraphy. The beauty of lines is performed in two-dimensional traditional painting and calligraphy, but Wang brings this sense of beauty into three-dimension architectural spaces.

What Wang Shu seeks is a type of “aesthetic sense” and a way to generate this sense in architecture. He attempts to find “aesthetic sense” from traditional art and architecture through his own bodily senses in everyday life, and then tries to produce the sense he finds in contemporary architectural practice, aspiring to the perception of “aesthetic sense” in the everyday use of architecture. What Wang borrows from traditional art and architecture is the spatial form of the courtyard, the state of half-landscape and half-architecture space, the paths frequently created in gardens, view from outside and inside, the idea of views which vary with the movement of the body, Chinese black-and-white wash painting, the spiritual sense of brush strokes in painting and calligraphy, and nostalgia for countryside life and for traditional handcrafting techniques. By re-interpreting these elements in the form of contemporary architecture, Wang succeeds in providing for an “aesthetic sense” which will only take form in actual experience, when the body is fully engaged with real spaces. Therefore, the “aesthetic sense” that Wang tries to approach is about a sense of intimacy between body and landscape, the ambiguity between architectural constructions and landscapes, a yearning for the free lifestyle of living at one’s own will, a sense of wandering in scroll-painting scenery with varied views and spaces, and a sort of simple and pure countryside life. The way to achieve these feelings is simply through bodily senses, perceptions and everyday experience. Poetry, to the Chinese, lies in these sensitive and emotional feelings coming from experience in everyday life. The architect imagines certain kinds of feelings and experience in the spaces he is designing and, based on such imagination, he designs physical spaces aiming to make these feelings happen in the people who engage with the spaces. Only for those architects who succeed in fully integrating bodily senses into their design practice will the “aesthetic sense” be evident in the physical spaces they create. Only for those people who fully involve their bodily senses in their experiences in actual spaces will it be possible for the “aesthetic sense” to be gained

and the poetry of everyday life to be perceived while they are experiencing the space.

According to John Dewey's aesthetics, aesthetic value is not fixed in theory, but can be sought from everyday needs and practical activities, and from the interaction between a living organism and its environment. This is what his concept of "somatic naturalism" basically means. Aesthetic value is always found by reflecting pragmatic value and satisfying everyday life in a more practical sense. Where there is a dynamic accumulation of the interaction between living circumstances and living intentions in everyday life, there is pragmatic aesthetics. The design of Xiangshan Campus is a kind of responding to Dewey's pragmatism. The value of the design resides in one's sensuous experience and the practical activities of everyday life. A certain "aesthetic sense" can only be aroused when one's bodily perceptions are fully open to the environment, and thus the body and the environment interact fully. When one is walking along the passages leading up towards the roof, one might find that it is a lovely place to relax the body with the fresh air, mild sunlight and attractive views in the distance. When one is seated at the waterside by the water house, one might find oneself drawn in by the slight smell of aquatic plants and want to stay to have a cup of tea or read a book. When one is taking a nap in a courtyard, one may feel pleased to be accompanied by the singing of birds. These are the moments in which the body is in close contact with the landscape and environment, the moments in which a kind of "aesthetic sense" will arrive, and where the value of Dewey's pragmatic aesthetics lies.

"Aesthetic sense" has for a long time been the highest pursuit for Chinese men of letters in artistic creation, no matter whether in poetry, painting, calligraphy or gardening. Chinese culture does not have a definite intellect–body dualism traditionally, but thinks that the world is an extension of the body: bodily senses are lenses through which we look at the world and shape the mind. This idea largely accords with Richard Shusterman's "somaesthetics", which asserts that beauty (knowledge) is not absolutely constructed through intellectual thinking, but through bodily experience. Tschumi's emphasis on the sensorial and experiential pleasure of architecture is also in accord with somaesthetics, as it sees the ultimate pleasure of architecture in the junction of concept and immediate bodily experience – the concept needs the experience to before it can be fully realised – and this idea is applied in his design of Parc

de La Villette. Tschumi intended for bodily pleasure to emerge from the body's engagement with the structures and landscapes in the park. This emphasis on experiential pleasure is in some ways connected with Wang Shu's idea of "aesthetic sense"; Tschumi looks at the joint between architectural concept and bodily pleasure, while Wang is interested in pleasure and aesthetic feelings, but their ideas both involve a dynamical process in which the body is engaged with the space.

In the design of Xiangshan Campus, "conceptual meaning" refers to a pragmatic way of designing focused on everyday life experience – an attempt to design a perceptual space where bodily sensations and emotions are centred. This "conceptual meaning" was generated from the architect's mind, from his attempt to borrow a kind of "aesthetic sense" from traditional arts and architecture, and from his encounter with the traditional philosophy which lays much emphasis on the body, its perceptions and everyday life. "Pragmatic meaning" might emerge at such times as the body is experiencing the space so that life is happening. As a result, it seems that "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" engage with each other at some point – the point where the design concept does not separate itself from the sensuous perceptions, but means to embrace and reinforce those sensuous perceptions and thus echo a kind of traditional understanding of "aesthetic sense" in everyday life.

4.4 How Architectural Designs Respond to Traditional Chinese Philosophies and Pragmatic Aesthetics

At different times, traditional philosophies have more or less influence on and are reflected more or less by design ideas in some way, especially when architects intentionally try to find design concepts from traditional ideas. As we know, in Chinese ideologies there is an ambiguity in black-and-white dualism. Both of the two projects considered in this chapter treat the landscape and buildings as complementary elements that each play a vital role in defining the other. Dong Yugan believes that it is impossible to design building and landscape

separately, as they are a whole as a Yin–Yang unit.[366] In his Red Brick Art Museum, building façades help to enclose and provide an entrance to the garden from both the ground floor and the loft floor, while the garden offers landscape views from the buildings through windows on the façades. Wang Shu also responds to this ambiguity by means of integrating landscapes and buildings. Neither the building nor landscape dominates, but rather they are merged to become an organic whole. Buildings are designed according to terrains and the relationship with the mountain, so that the overall layout of buildings looks organic, flexible and freewheeling, corresponding to their environment. Wang has summarised three typological patterns of building – mountain house, water house and courtyard – which represent different relationships between landscape and architecture. Each of them provides one interpretation of how landscapes interact with buildings. The most intimate contact with the landscape will be achieved when one is experiencing artificial spaces designed according to these typological patterns.

Regional culture has always been given the same weight as royal or orthodox culture. The preference for regional materials and techniques can be found in both of the projects discussed above. Dong adopts old tiles and bricks for constructions in the garden. Old bricks and tiles have been piled up to be used as new walls, fences and rails. Larger numbers of old tiles and bricks have been used in Xiangshan Campus, and regional materials and construction techniques, such as stone masonry, are also considered in the design, which altogether creates a sense of nostalgia for folk culture. Moreover, the favouring of countryside life is also related to the idea of ambiguous duality. Unlike other universities, Xiangshan Campus has not been located in a government-planned university district, but has chosen to stay in an incompletely developed city fringe where wild fields and farmlands still remain. A well-developed city area, where high-density high-rise buildings are preferred, is not considered to be superior to wild fields and farmlands; rather, in Xiangshan Campus, wild fields maintain harmony with the newly added buildings, and farmlands are still run by local people. The simplicity and purity of countryside life is presented and advocated so as to memorialise

[366] According to the personal interview I conducted with Dong in Beijing, 13 November 2015.

regional rural life in the past.

The body's perception is a significant concern in Chinese tradition, as *The Book of Changes* believes that all our understandings of the world come from bodily perceptions and intuitions of the surrounding environment. This idea agrees with Shusterman's somaesthetics. It is by perceiving and observing with our bodily senses that we shape the world that we know and create philosophies, the laws of the world. Therefore, the intellect is something neither superior to bodily senses nor absolutely apart from the body, but something relying on and being assisted by the body. The pursuit of "aesthetic sense" is about approaching certain emotional feelings. The gaining of these feelings requires the body to participate fully in real experience. Architectural design is about designing spaces in which certain feelings and bodily experiences can take place. The architect can decide what feelings he/her would like to approach and what physical spaces could generate these targeted feelings, by imagining himself/herself in possible spaces. For instance, the sense of being intimate with the landscape could be realised by placing buildings adaptively on particular terrains or with mountain views, by setting courtyards and implanting the landscape between buildings, and by linking the landscape with buildings as an organic whole using continuous passages. After these physical spaces have been built, the kind of "aesthetic sense" anticipated by the architect will hopefully be felt by the bodies of the people who actually access the physical spaces. The body acts as an intermediary linking physical spaces and "aesthetic sense".

Chinese architectural theories are basically not about pure concepts, but refer more to conventions which are shaped and evolve through practical experience and empirical evidence. Chinese tradition prefers actual practice to purely intellectual theories. Pragmatic aesthetics also agrees that the beauty does not come from linguistic description or concepts, but rather come through bodily perceptions and actions in the dynamical way of creating the art work and the dynamical experience of perceiving the art work. The concept of Red Brick Art Museum is exactly about a pragmatic approach to dealing with concrete problems according to current circumstances – "following rather than altering the object's original features". As the delivering of this method, the building has been given form and the form acts as the consequence resulting from decisions about how to cope with practical matters

in real spaces. The value of pragmatic aesthetics of the building lies in the dynamical process through which the building was created, while the value of pragmatic aesthetic of Xiangshan campus lies in the dynamical experience when we perceive the space, which is what the architect intended to achieve. The design of Xiangshan Campus pursues a kind of "aesthetic sense", and this sense can only be perceived through the body's experience in real spaces, through which "pragmatic meaning" might emerge. Hence, both of the projects discussed in this chapter required pragmatism to be engaged in design, in the search for their design concepts. This way of finding concepts from pragmatic concerns echoes Chinese tradition's preference for pragmatism.

Chinese philosophies do not regard everything as static, but rather view things as always changeable and all the time ready to generate new things if Yin–Yang interaction occurs. This is consistent with the pragmatist's idea that things are always changing afresh, without monistic truth. This idea is very much manifested in both of the projects considered here. For Red Brick Art Museum, there was no pre-imagined picture for the final form before the building was actually built. The form of the building gradually came into being in accordance with changing circumstances and the solutions to these circumstances. The consequence of the building form comes out of various balanced solutions in design process. The idea of scenery varying in accordance with the movement of the body has been taken into account in the design of Xiangshan Campus. Views are neither stable nor entirely exposed in front of the eyes, but rather they vary as the body moves through spaces, and the body is required to actively explore the spaces with its sensory system. This echoes the idea of change. The idea "to generate" has rooted impact on the "conceptual meaning" of Red Brick Art Museum, since the architect Dong insisted that if the existing circumstances matched with certain appropriate imagery, design solutions would be generated and the building form would be shaped. Similar to Red Brick Art Museum, in the design of Xiangshan Campus, the architectural form was also generated by matching a kind of "aesthetic sense" with certain physical spaces. The ambition of such architecture, then, is to generate certain expected senses and sensations when the body is actually involved in the spaces created.

The architects who are interested in pragmatic aesthetics could visit some contemporary

projects designed by Chinese literary architects. There are currently a group of Chinese literary architects who are seeking concepts from classical philosophies and try to apply that in their contemporary projects. Wang Shu and Dong Yugan are two important architects involved in this trend. They are interested in architectural tectonics, gardening, somaesthetics, traditional philosophies and arts, the relationship between building and landscape, and regional culture. However, not only Chinese examples are connected to pragmatic aesthetics. For architects such as Peter Zumthor, the design could also manifest the idea of pragmatic aesthetics. To Zumthor, a building has sensuous connections to life. A building "is being itself, being a building, not representing anything, just being".[367] The being of the building, as stated by Zumthor, can be sensitively perceived by the body. When one comes across a building, if one's body is actively and intuitively in contact with the space in which the body is situated, the body will immediately realise the presence of the building; thus, at that point, one might perceive the being of the building. In this sense, the body is linked to the materiality of the building. Moreover, Zumthor is interested in the ways of realising buildings, corresponding to pragmatist's idea that aesthetics exists in the dynamical experience of creation. One of Zumthor's smallest projects, the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, clearly shows the way that he attempts to connect the sensuousness of the body with the materiality of the building. What the body comes across within this small chapel is a series of carefully designed spaces, structures and materials, which come from unique construction methods. A very sombre and reflective feeling would be aroused during one's encounter with the chapel that makes the building sensuously connected with the body.[368] The particular ways through which the pragmatic aesthetics is embodied in Zumthor's works and the comparison between Chinese examples and Zumthor's works could be one of my future research directions.

[367] Anca Mitrache (2012), "Ornamental Art and Architectural Decoration", *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 51, pp. 567–572, p. 569.

[368] For details of Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, please see Chapter 1.

Chapter 5. Conclusion: Architecture Is Not a Written Concept Only

The preceding chapters discussed the two ways of meaning in architecture, referring to the major themes of pragmatic aesthetics, semiotics, the architecture of deconstruction, and traditional Chinese philosophies, architecture and landscapes, all of which aimed to clarify one point: that architecture is not a fixed written concept only. It can be seen that architecture is at times considered to be equal to a conceptual idea, presented in design drawings and other forms of presentation. Though ideas and drawings can to some degree manifest the significance of the architecture and reflect architectural context and history, they are still only part of architecture; the rest lies in the dynamic process of creating the space and the dynamic interactions between the body and the space. Conceptual ideas can look towards the end, but can never predict and guarantee what happens next.

The Conclusion will further address the differences between the two ways of meaning – namely, the different approaches to producing them and their different roles. It will reclaim the gap between written concepts and actual perceptions and try to identify the reasons for this gap. Pragmatic aesthetics requires architecture to be the dynamic process of creating and experiencing spaces, so that building form is considered not the purpose but the consequence of design practice. Building form should not be envisaged at the beginning but should be shaped through the process of creating a space and finished only at the end of the building work. Pragmatic aesthetics also suggests that architecture should be a living art. This kind of art does not come from musing over a static art work, but from daily activities, integrated with dynamic bodily feelings. Pragmatism is a sense of everydayness. Only when one pays full attention to everyday life, when one's intellect is immersed in bodily experience, will this kind of aesthetics emerge.

5.1 Distinctions between "Conceptual Meaning" and "Pragmatic Meaning"

Distinctions between "conceptual meaning" and "pragmatic meaning" can be made according to the case studies considered above. The first distinction is the way in which meaning is

produced in architecture. “Conceptual meaning” is generated from the architect’s mind, from his/her encounters with the context of the site, the culture, the requirements of the brief, the function of the building, regional materials and technologies, and his/her design aesthetics. A good architect might approach a commission with the intention of developing a concept which represents a balanced combination of his/her own preferences and the complexities of the project. A concept is supposed to be formed as the architect tries to deal with all of these things and the design is being shaped. Once the architect has accomplished the design, the “conceptual meaning” will be completely formed and will never be modified. Therefore, this way of meaning is generative and unchangeable. The concept will not be expected to be changed through the engagement of future users: the “conceptual meaning” is fixed in the design. In all of the cases studied in this research, from Centre Pompidou to Xiangshan Campus, the architects began the search for “conceptual meaning” from the beginning of the design process. For Centre Pompidou, the design concept implies the purposes of the buildings. The architects used slogan-like descriptions as the purpose of the design, the roles that the buildings would perform – to “liberate culture”, which was generated in the context of the rise of mass culture. For Parc de la Villette, the design concept, deconstruction, comes from linguistics. The architect intended to translate the idea into an architectural concept. The purpose of the concept was to inform the building up of a deconstructive space where there is no self-evident essential meaning, while the design is about interpreting the deconstructive idea in terms of physical spaces and actual activities, so that the concept is what the design aims to explain. The concept of Red Brick Art Museum is rather an idea of design methodology than one with a definite purpose or an anticipation of the building’s final form. The concept guided the architect to follow the original features of the existing objects instead of altering them. Hence, the architect is more concerned with how to resolve existing problems throughout the design process, and thus the building forms come into being simultaneously, rather than thinking in advance about how the final forms should look. In Xiangshan Campus, the aim was to create a poetic place which could arouse people’s bodily senses and engender bodily enjoyment, so that a certain “aesthetic sense” can be reached if people immerse their bodily senses fully in the space.

Concept is an iconic sign, according to Peirce's semiotics, and design is the object in which the sign lies. The iconic sign has its own peculiar interpretability before it reaches its knowers, the future users: the "conceptual meaning" is independent from its knower. As we can see, all of the cases discussed in this research have kinds of "conceptual meaning", no matter how users understand the space, these kinds of "conceptual meaning" cannot be changed. They are fixed ideas embodied in spatial design, presented in the form of texts, diagrams, photographs, videos and models, independent from users' further interpretations.

In contrast, "pragmatic meaning" is a symbolic sign which relates to knowers' dynamic and diverse interpretations. The production of "pragmatic meaning" depends on users' experience in actual spaces. "Pragmatic meaning" grows in spaces when actual experience occurs. It is not fixed, but dynamically and accumulatively emerges in spaces as people interact with them. In Centre Pompidou, organisers try to produce "pragmatic meaning" by arranging events. Members of the public actively seek "pragmatic meaning" in the spaces, and "pragmatic meaning" emerges when they engage in events there. Spaces are signs to users. The interactions between people's experience and the spaces imply diverse kinds of "pragmatic meaning", and act as objects to symbolic signs. As experience changes, "pragmatic meaning" is constantly being renewed. In Parc de la Villette, when the architect was designing the park, he had a concept in mind that the public should be given the greatest freedom possible to produce meaning for the spaces. Users take these actual spaces as the signs of spontaneous events. This way of meaning is emergent and dynamically changeable. Architects can never anticipate how future users will interact with the spaces they have created, and how diverse the "pragmatic meaning" will be. "Pragmatic meaning" is always beyond the architect's imagination. Bernard Tschumi knew this, and had it in mind when he set out in search of a design concept. Thus, in his Parc de la Villette, he did not attempt to fix a definite meaning for each particular space, but left the meaning to be produced through users' engagement.

The two Chinese examples focus more on the design approaches where pragmatic aesthetics is embodied, so that trying to offer architects alternative ways of design. The design concepts are found from traditional philosophies which have close connections to pragmatic aesthetics. Chinese traditional philosophies are considered to be originated in *I-Ching*, from the intuitive

understanding of the surrounding environment through the body's perceptions; and thus ideas developed from that believes that there is an unclear separation between the intellect and bodily senses, between theory and practice, and Chinese tradition is secular, without much concern for the permanent aspect of culture, and tends to focus on things with actual effects, without much intention on describing the reality for any linguistic reason.

Red Brick Art Museum shows that design concept can also be a pragmatic approach to design itself. Pragmatism resides in the architect's practice during the design process. This approach steers the production of design throughout the process, until all problems have been solved and the building form has consequently come into being. Design is created as a consequence of acknowledging the current conditions of the building, upon which spaces are updated so as to match its future role as an art gallery, and in this way the outcome of the project evolves. The purpose of this example is to see the way in which the architect approaches the consequence, namely, the dynamic process of creating meaningful spaces. The design concept of the building is neither about a concept for visual-effect intention, nor aim for any supposed particular result in advance, but it embodies an attitude of orientation as to move the design forward. Therefore, it at some point meets the ideas of pragmatism. Pragmatic aesthetics emphasises on a sort of dynamic aesthetic experience, which means art does not only exist in static artefacts displaying in galleries, but also exists in the dynamic experience that we sensually feel it, the design of Xiangshan campus is a good example reflecting the idea of pragmatic aesthetics from this point. The "pragmatic meaning" in Xiangshan Campus is produced when bodies actually experience the spaces. People have to fully free up their bodily senses in order to perceive the poetry that the architect intended them to experience on the site.

From Peirce's point of view, an indexical sign has connection with the senses or memory of a person for whom it serves as a sign.[369] If something is capable of arousing in a person a specific sense or memory, that sense or memory is attached to the thing, and then the thing could be

[369] Charles S. Peirce (1932), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Volume 2)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 170.

an indexical sign to the person. When we hear a piece of music from a wedding song that we have come across before and we know that it is about a wedding, we might feel moved immediately, as we have previously connected the song to love and romance. The wedding song acts as an indexical sign to us. Each time we come across the song we will be affected, and this is the effect of the sign. When we encounter a place where we have had specific experiences before, we might recall a specific memory or feeling that was stored in mind, and the place that is connected to that certain memory or feeling is an indexical sign. When we engage with Xiangshan Campus, the environmental quality gives us feelings of relaxation, nostalgia and tranquillity; we probably call these sorts of feelings “poetry”. If the sense of poetry is a memorable experience for us, each time we think about Xiangshan Campus the sense of poetry will be recalled: in our minds the space has a connection with the sense of poetry – it even represents what we call poetry – and thus Xiangshan Campus acts as an indexical sign in this case.

Once the body is creatively interacting with a space instead of experiencing a memorial or emotional effect only, the indexical sign will be converted into a symbolic sign, and this is when “pragmatic meaning” grows. The poetic sense of the Xiangshan Campus makes it an ideal place for university events. Activities occur randomly around the campus: lectures on the environment-intimate flat roof, group discussion in the courtyard, reading by the water-bank and dating around the mountain-like buildings. The sense of poetry brings to everyday life in the campus more pleasure and comfortableness. Therefore, the major distinction of “pragmatic meaning” is that it is not a static icon, but is always changing afresh. Though architects try to have pragmatic concerns in mind, they are not able to control when and how “pragmatic meaning” will develop in actual spaces, but rather users will take over and dominate the space.

The second distinction is about the role of architectural forms. For “conceptual meaning”, architectural forms serve as objects signifying a particular “conceptual meaning” that the architect has created. Sometimes “conceptual meaning” can be evident in architectural forms, but sometimes it is not. Architectural forms serve as the products of the architect’s design concepts. The values transferred from the social context or from aesthetics are transplanted

into architectural forms through the architect's efforts at meaning production. Hence, architectural forms are the fixed objects in which "conceptual meaning" tries to inscribe itself, without any consideration of future changes or further interpretations. However, for "pragmatic meaning", architectural forms serve as a starting point, and "pragmatic meaning" is possibly generated in buildings according to users' experience. The architectural forms of the cases discussed in this research all have two roles: they are both the products of design concepts and places in which "pragmatic meaning" emerges. Architects create immaterial ideas and material forms, what users know is the material matters, something they could engage with and make practical use, but not the architect's idea. The material forms of architecture is the line with two sides, where architects live before the line, whilst users live after.

Another distinction is about the different benefits related to the two ways of meaning. "Conceptual meaning" is related to the personal capital of architects. That is why architects are fond of participating in exhibitions or showcases with their conceptual designs, in order to expand their influence and thus improve their personal reputations. The architect's preferences in conceptual design, drawing and exhibition is associated with the cult of genius artists in Romanticism. Some architects would also like to be regarded, and adored, as artistic geniuses, and so prefer to engage in architecture in an artistic way, attending exhibitions, displaying conceptual drawings, rendering pictures and models, and participating in media coverage, so as to create the image of artistic genius, and thus improve their social reputation.

The architect's personal capital may then be transferred to the capital of architecture and even the city. That is why city managers prefer to employ higher-capital architects to participate in grand city projects, as the transference of the architect's capital is beneficial for city branding. Sage Gateshead music centre is a grand project in Newcastle-Gateshead, which was planned to be international, attractive and inclusive. Norman Foster offered Newcastle-Gateshead a shining architectural form, and the music centre's high cultural status was reinforced because of the participation of Foster. Now domestic and international visits are arranged in the building frequently, the architectural concept is introduced to visitors, and thus the architectural concept somehow facilitates the enrichment of the city's image. Therefore,

“conceptual meaning” is beneficial to architects’ and cities’ fortunes.

However, “pragmatic meaning” depends on seeing a building as a “thing”, since “pragmatic meaning” emerges in buildings only when they link with everyday life, confront actual problems, empirical matters and bodily perceptions, and serve the people who experience their spaces instead of only serving as images in magazines, exhibitions or showcases. As people experience a space, it becomes more associated with their everyday life and they become more engaged in living problems, emotions and common senses, and therefore the space becomes a “thing”. To design a “thing”, we ought to consider actual demands first and link those demands to the design of spaces. The aim of design is to achieve something which can meet empirical needs. For example, the self-supporting function of a jug is related to the need for a vessel in which to serve food or drink, the system of lines in Parc de la Villette meets the need of the movement of the body, and the walkable roof in the northern garden of Red Brick Art Museum responds to the need to have more landscape views from a distance. People can find these kinds of “pragmatic meaning” when they actually experience these particular spaces.

One issue this research has to stress is that architecture should never be a written concept only. We can find plenty of design concepts presented in the form of brilliant texts, diagrams, images, videos and models in architecture magazines and exhibitions and on websites. However, it is questionable to what extent these beautiful concepts can be practically transferred into actual spaces or can be perceived by users in their experience. It seems that there is a gap, or misalignment, between what the design concept claims a building to be and the impression that the building makes when it is encountered. If architecture acts as a written concept only, then the designs will be reduced to being an armchair strategy. The design might have a good start, but a poor end. The attitude this research holds towards architectural design is that finding a concept is undoubtedly important as a good start for a project; however, a pragmatic ending should weigh more than the concept, since “pragmatic meaning” is more closely connected to daily life, and serves users rather than being played out merely within the architectural circle. Therefore, the way we evaluate a design ought not to depend only on “conceptual meaning”, but “pragmatic meaning”, the good ending, ought also to be

considered. The following will provide a more detailed explanation on the gap between written concepts and actual perceptions and the desirable attitude towards design suggested by this research.

5.2 The Gap between Written Concepts and Actual Perceptions

It is quite common to perceive a gap between architects' written ideas and users' perceptions in actual spaces. Written ideas are usually presented in the form of conceptual diagrams, illustrative texts, images or models, such as the conceptual diagram of three disjunctive and superimposed systems of Parc de la Villette. Perceptions are what users feel in actual places. In fact, what is perceived by users in Parc de la Villette is not exactly about the systematic relationship between these points, lines and surfaces, which the architect proposed as the park's approach to spatial organisation, but how a specific space can interact with their life in the park. The building form of the Jewish Museum in Berlin signifies various forms of symbolic meaning; for example, the scar-like windows and zigzag pattern throughout the museum were an attempt to represent the architect's concept of the conflictual history of the German and Jewish peoples. However, when people are actually experiencing the spaces in the museum, it is hard for them to be aware that they express this concept of the complex connections between two peoples.

Symbolic meaning is a language, a kind of interpretation which is created by people, but interpretation is merely partial explanation; sometimes our body can understand things through actual experience without interpretation playing a part. As Shusterman recognises, understanding is unthinking and unconscious, while interpretation needs conscious and deliberate thoughts. There might be things that we experience and feel that are not necessarily able to be described by conscious language. Some architects like to create a conscious language, but people always experience spaces through the body's understanding. When, at times, people cannot understand the meaning of a space in the "right" way as defined by the architect, there develops a "gap" between the architect and the people.

Architects and historians sometimes tend to judge architecture more in the light of a fine art,

and less according to the priorities of living experience. The merit of architectural beauty resides in the pursuit of ideal forms, such as the classical symmetry and Corbusier's mechanical order of architecture. Therefore, if the concept is made in this way, it will probably turn to be an abstract description of the formalistic beauty, and thus the building will perform as an "object" instead of a "place" to dwell. [370] Then the building is supposed merely to be admired or to serve as a physical product for watch and sale. However, when a building is involved in ongoing human life, it will become a "place". The building does not become a "place" to people unless somewhere to which they feel their lives are connected. Sometimes people occupy buildings but cannot feel at home, because they do not dwell there.[371] It is people who create a "place", for example when they start to think about how to decorate their offices, such as hanging a picture on the wall, or putting some plants around windows, at this time their offices are becoming living places for them. The phenomenological appreciation of buildings, associated with individuals' sensitivities of emotion and experience, offers a richer way of describing the world than through visionary concepts. The sense of place can be connected to the Heideggerian theory of the "thing". The word "thing" describes life's paraphernalia, immersed in experience and use rather than distantly observed according to an abstract system. "Things" are appreciated through their engagement with everyday life. Something is distinguished as a "thing" primarily because humans have a physical and intellectual relationship with it. Where "pragmatic meaning" grows, there is a "thing". A building can be a "thing" if it helps people to orientate themselves in the world by enabling them to relate to the space around them through their own perception and experience. The conception–perception misalignment refers to the difference between architecture acting as an "object" and acting as a "place". Architects may prefer the abstract conception to be involved in designs, conceiving designs as objects, paying less attention to the importance of being. Before spaces are actually used, designs can only be illustrated through architectural drawings, videos and models, but it is not possible to survey their actual pragmatic value. However, when users

[370] Adam Sharr (2007), *Heidegger for Architects*, London & New York : Routledge, pp. 37–38.

[371] Martin Heidegger (2001), "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York: Perennial Classics, pp. 143–159, p. 145.

come into a space, they will understand the space by experiencing and perceiving in order to turn it into a "place" related to their everyday life. Consequently, in this sense, a gap develops as buildings are understood differently according to the different perspectives of their designers and their users.

There has at times been a disjunction between architects' production of concepts and users' practice in actual spaces, which stems from the opposition of the two different forms of social space that the architects and the users engage in. Within a certain culture, architects and users often practise in an isolated way in their distinct forms of social space: architects are more likely to engage in "representations of space", while users are more often involved in "representational spaces". "Representations of space" refers to conceived spaces, conceptualised spaces, which "are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose", so that they are related "to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations".[372] This is the space of cultural power, the dominating part of a certain relation of production, in which architects, planners, urbanists and other specialists with higher cultural capital are involved, aiming to legitimate and maintain certain kinds of conceived orders. On the other hand, "representational spaces" are lived realms, where inhabitants' and users' practice is based on direct images, available sources, and the things that can actually be perceived or described in the space.[373] This is the dominated part, hence considered as a "passively experienced" space[374]; but this part is filled with the opportunities created by unpredictable changes conducted by users which cannot be controlled by architects' conception.

In this sense, the opposition of architects' conceptual production and users' perceptual experience is about the contradiction between cultural authority and the chaos of everyday practice, between abstract knowledge and concrete life, and between legitimated language and individual bodies. Working within the representations of space, architects are often trapped by themselves in a narrow and autonomous speciality; users are abstracted and

[372] Henri Lefebvre (1991), *The Production of Space*, Oxford, Oxon, & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, p. 33.
[373] Ibid., p. 39.
[374] Ibid.

identified as part of the conception, but the most lived and diverse aspects have often been neglected by architects. They prefer to nest in this conceived realm, establish conceptual limits on their own interests, and choose to present their ideas in architectural drawings, models, videos and texts which are widely used as the main tools of architectural representations. However, after a designed space has been in use, the actual experience emerging in that space will be more specific, more individualised, more lively and more complicated than that conceived in the architect's imagination, and thus architects lose their authority in the lived space.

Architects prefer to go to the most specific end of the design, so as to fully manifest their power. Therefore, architects like to employ "system-buildings", a conceptual way of design assertion, attempting to be all-encompassing. Architects sometimes do not welcome "counter-projects" – projects where the architect does not necessarily control over all of the specifics, some of which may remain "the task of individuals and communities to invent". [375] Counter-projects mean that the architect's "ownership" of a space is shared by other parties – territorial entities, urban communities and so on – with their diverse interests, some of which might be completely opposite to those of the architect, so that some architects would try to avoid that.[376] But only when architects give up their desire for sole "ownership" and try to approach a collaborative way of designing can the gap between architects and users be dissolved.

Architecture traditionally has a priority of forms – the history of architecture is often understood as a transformation of aesthetic forms. Acting as architectural language, the form performs in the same way as language, which "is made not to be believed, but to be obeyed, and to compel the obedience".[377] Each aesthetic form prevails over a period and is considered an absolute rule which ought to be obeyed. The pictorial quality of the building is stressed, but the immanent order in everyday life played out in the building often remains undiscovered. It seems that architecture has built a closed system, a "home" for architects, where they play on

[375] Nathaniel Coleman (2015), *Lefebvre for Architects*, Abingdon, Oxon, & New York, NY: Routledge, p. 85.

[376] Ibid., p. 86.

[377] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari (2004), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: Continuum, p. 84.

the basis of an agreement. This agreement can be arbitrary, because on the one hand it may show good ability in legitimating some principles of architectural design that are seen to be valuable, such as by contributing to the image of a city through a special focus on aesthetic forms, but on the other hand it might imply the denial of the value of some others, such as by focusing too much on aesthetic forms, leading to the values of the everyday life that will happen within the space being ignored. One Deleuzian concept, "territorialisation", refers to a state of mind of wandering across multiple systems of ideas achieved by making deterritorialisations and finding new reterritorialisations. [378] One's mind can be deterritorialised and reterritorialised as one switches from one common-sense regime to another. If one feels "at home", the surrounding objects with which one is interacting become habitual, part of one's life, and one's territorialisation is accomplished. Architecture has been territorialised to be a closed system, a system pursuing aesthetic forms and sole "ownership". But an architect has to deal with other people – moving between different common-sense regimes – when he/she is participating in a project with other groups of people with their own particular visions and attitudes, such as planners, engineers, builders, local authorities, communities, etc. If the architect fails to enter other territories, a sort of barrier to understanding occurs, which may have an impact on the way that the project proceeds. If the architect is unable to visit the territory of local people's daily life, he/she will not be able to have a close dialogue within the local's common-sense regime, and thus people's understanding of a building often differs from the architect's concept.

A building can be a place with a prevailing order that tries to control every specific end of the building. But "whenever a multiplicity is taken up in a structure, its growth is offset by its law of combination" [379], therefore, when a building is dominated by a singular order, the possibilities of the growth of "pragmatic meaning" might be considerably reduced. If we compare a building to a song, when the building is produced for the sake of achieving a particular end, then the song is a work song, a song with clear purposes, such as marching

[378] Andrew Ballantyne (2007), *Deleuze and Guattari for Architects*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 38–40.

[379] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 6.

song.[380] This kind of song can help us to get things done without us having to be engaged in the process of events. What we do follows the formative order, moving the body without active thinking or creation. Thus, this kind of song is actually unhelpful in everyday circumstance, and "pragmatic meaning" cannot be produced in this kind of place, since pragmatism will only be achieved when the place actively engages people and welcomes their creativity. The immanent order is inherent in actual things, the things we can see, touch and feel, which is opposite to transcendence, something outside of life. If an architecture tries to go beyond its formative territories, to remove existing habits of thinking, to seek unformed elements and sets of affects, then it might discover the immanent order of everyday life. A building with dynamically emerging "pragmatic meaning" is never a closed system. It is always wondering, seeking new interpretations, and being re-produced repeatedly as people use its spaces in various ways. The ever-emerging "pragmatic meaning" immediately updates the system. The system always has an unstable status; it is open, approaching any future possibilities; it moves on with the changes of daily life, without an intention to achieve a particular end.

A building is merely a part of the organic whole of life. A building is meaningless without users' engagement. It is users that activate the building as a live matter. The physical space of a building alone acts as a part of a "machine", if we consider the machine as an abstract idea that refers to an organic whole. Once a machine is assembled, it has an identity and a life of its own.[381] All parts of the machine act together to continue its life and production. The building-machine will be activated and become productive when the space is in use. The building can produce affects in users, but these affects are not produced by the building acting alone. They are produced when the building and the users come into contact.[382] The users and the building constitute a machine. The two parts in this mechanical working system have to collaborate properly to make the building work and to produce "pragmatic meaning".

Parc de la Villette is a very conceptual project. Tschumi sought to achieve an abstract concept,

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[380] Ballantyne, *Deleuze and Guattari for Architects*, p. 60.

[381] Ibid., p. 23.

[382] Ibid., pp. 41–42.

and did a great deal of diagrammatic analysis on translating deconstruction into the project. The project started with abstract philosophical aesthetics, from the point of criticism of the previous aesthetic foundation and the establishment of the organisational system of spaces. It employed philosophy from a foreign field (linguistics), which acts as a subversive strategy for creating aesthetic rupture. In the conceptual illustration of the project, it is emphasised repetitively that Parc de la Villette is in the avant-garde in relation to the conservative architectural milieu. The concept of the superimposition of the three disjunctive structures serves as an opposite to the ideology of totality and also acts as a discrete system isolated from the surrounding urban context. Permutation and substitution are also emphasised, as against architectural convention, in order to achieve "a reversal of the classical oppositions and a general displacement of the system".[383] Therefore, it seems that the architectural concept is generated neither from the environmental context nor from a user's point of view. The concept is taken to be an architect's personal property, and the accomplishment of the project is seen as a success of the architect's own experiment. Although Tschumi insists on the significance of the correlation of events and spaces, he did not take any site context into account in the approach to developing the concept, and pragmatic concerns in the design are, to a large degree, a means of achieving his conceptual ambition.

Therefore, Parc de la Villette was created through top-down imposition of philosophical aesthetics. However, when users see it from a phenomenological perspective in actual spaces, the three superimposed systems can hardly be found, and yet everybody who is experiencing the spaces contributes to fulfilling Tschumi's concept. From the Deleuzian perspective, Tschumi found deconstruction as his territory. In order to explain the concepts of anti-synthesis and decentralisation, he employed a superimposed system, an abstract formalistic system, and the formation of this system was perfectly illustrated by his conceptual diagrams. Tschumi set on his search for a design concept by exploiting deconstructive theory and applying it in architectural practice, in order to accomplish his territorialisation through practical experiments in actual spaces. The physical spaces of Parc de la Villette act as part of

[383] Bernard Tschumi (1988), "Parc de la Villette, Paris", in Papadakēs, A. (ed.), *Deconstruction in Architecture*, London: Architectural Design, pp. 33–39, p. 38.

a machine, and can be activated when users enter the spaces and “pragmatic meaning” is produced from everyday circumstances. The park is part of a machine. But when the park is used in different ways on different occasions, it becomes a plurality of machines. These plural machines, juxtaposed on the park, are worked out by users who are interacting with the space with different types of bodily effort. The park, at that point, becomes an “erotic” space, as it is a conjunction of theoretical concept and the subtle matter of events; the ambiguous pleasure of the combination of rationality (concepts) and irrationality (sensual experience) recalls “erotic” concerns, in Tschumi’s understanding.

Users have perceptions and creativity when they are experiencing the spaces and these cannot be exactly controlled by the architect. The architect’s design can merely provide an inorganic part of a machine; users’ experience will arise and add a live part of the machine. The park produces affects in users. Users’ experience in the space depends on their bodily perceptions, living habits, ways of understanding the world, previous experiences, personal beliefs and preferences. Both the physical space and the users’ personal factors participate in forming an overall picture of the park in one’s mind. As this is the collaborative work of physical spaces and users’ inner characteristics, the architect alone is not able to create the whole picture. If architects are obsessed with concepts and insist on achieving particular endings, a misalignment might be generated between conception and perception. That is the reason that we often find a difference between what the architect describes about a building and what we actually perceive in the building. Fortunately, Tschumi did not try to exactly define a particular ending. What he proposed was a conceptual structure of three systems and briefly imagined activities – point-like, linear and surface-like – leaving plenty of room for future events taking place in the spaces; the dynamically growing “pragmatic meaning”, and thus the whole story, was left open to further development, but will never reach a definite end.

5.3 Form Is Not the Purpose but the Consequence of a Dynamic Process of Creation

Pragmatism does not aim for any predetermined particular result, but is rather an attitude of orientation, attempting to look towards fruits, consequences and facts. If an architect

intervenes in a design project with this kind of attitude, the building form will act as a consequence of the design practice instead of a purpose of the design. Richard Rorty offers a new method of justifying philosophy. He disagrees with the way that philosophers are asked for arguments against the intrinsic truth of reality; his suggested new method is to redescribe things in new ways until the new pattern of linguistic behaviour is accepted among the rising generation. This sort of philosophy does not analyse concept; rather, it works pragmatically. It suggests that people should try thinking about things or doing things in alternative ways, but it does not argue for the suggestion on the basis of antecedent criteria.[384] It is the same in architecture. Architects should not be asked for a clear depiction of the final building form on the basis of any criteria, symbolic or material, before the design is fully carried out. The building form should work pragmatically. It has to evolve through continual attempts of designing and redesigning, until it reaches a final form. The form is the consequence of design. Any attempt to make building form the purpose of the design practice is hard to justify.

According to tectonic concerns, architectural form should be the consequence of construction practice, rather putting preconceived perfect ideas or idealist illusions in the architect's mind before construction practice. Tectonic architecture is considered as independent from a symbolic system. The symbols concealed in iconic buildings are manifested by the building's masses and surfaces. Symbols are more about graphic matters, and do not treat a building as a "thing". "Mass, surface and plan" have become a mainstream focus in modernist architecture since Le Corbusier stressed them in his book *Towards a New Architecture*.[385] But Frampton's tectonics challenges these mainstream ideas. For Frampton, modern architecture should first be concerned with structural and constructional techniques, and only then refer to Le Corbusier's spatial and abstract form. Frampton sees architecture as a poetics of construction. There is no specific style appended to tectonics, no predetermined form before construction, but tectonics necessarily has a relationship with

[384] Richard Rorty (1989), *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge, UK, & New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 8–9.

[385] Le Corbusier (1987), *Towards a New Architecture*, London: Architecture Press.

topos and typos – the circumstances on the site and the type of the building.[386]

The concept of "basic architecture", proposed by a Chinese architectural theorist Zhang Yonghe, stands in line with Frampton's tectonic idea that insists that form is the consequence of constructional process instead of being fully formed before construction. "Basic architecture" sees the meanings of architecture as residing in the pragmatic process of design, which is embodied in three sets of relationships: building and site, man and space, and construction and materials (the aesthetics of material, structure, constructional methods and regulations). "Basic architecture" is concerned with the way in which the building interacts with the environment, how users get involved in spaces so that activities are generated, and the method by which constructional techniques collaborate with materials. Therefore, architecture is shaped as the consequence of dealing with these relationships. Zhang also claims that "basic architecture" is independent from any social ideologies, and that the meaning of architecture is to be found within its constructional law. No architectural trend or style belongs to "basic architecture", since they are impacted by social ideologies and symbolic systems.[387] Although it is hard to agree that architecture ought to be fully autonomous from social ideologies, nevertheless Zhang has proposed a positive value: that form should act as the consequence rather than as the purpose of design practice, and that form is produced on the basis of dealing with pragmatic issues instead of on symbolic meaning.

Red Brick Art Museum is a good example that sees the form as the consequence of the dynamic process of designing and building, and this is also what pragmatic aesthetics suggests. It provides a way in which form is gradually produced according to existing pragmatic problems, without presupposing any fixed image of the final form before the design practice. Reliance on existing circumstance has long been central to Chinese craft creation. Bai Juyi's verse which states that "the vessel should assume the shape of the material" is the poetic portrayal of this tradition. This idea abides by the rule of "following

[386] Kenneth Frampton (1995), *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 2.

[387] Yonghe Zhang & Lufeng Zhang (2000), "Learning from Industrial Architecture" "向工业建筑学习", *World Architecture*, 2000 (7), pp. 22–23, p. 22.

rather than altering the objects' original features", so that it will result in "twice the yield, half the work". Designers incorporate the idea exemplified in craftsmanship into gardening and architectural design. Red Brick Art Museum is one case demonstrating the principle of shaping the building form by relying on the existing circumstances, following as much as possible rather than altering the object's original features. The concept is a method of designing concerned with coping with real problems in the design process rather than focusing on the final form of the building. The ultimate building form presents itself at the end of the design, after pragmatic problems have all been resolved. The building form is the consequence of the design, rather than any symbolic or iconic purpose. The architect did not have any clear intentions regarding building form at the beginning. What he knew was the existing conditions of the old factory and conventional building techniques, and what he could imagine was how to ensure that the future museum would function well, and how the building could be more sensuously associated with traditional garden life. The building fully represents the substance of the building itself. In this sense, the design of Red Brick Art Museum well echoes what Frampton called "ontological aspects of tectonic form".[388] The ontological tectonic form refers to the core of a building that is "simultaneously both its fundamental structure and its substance", while the representational aspects emphasise the skin of a building that tries to represent a sort of symbolic meaning. Red Brick Art Museum does not attempt to present any symbolic meaning, but rather the meaning comes from the substance of the building itself – the materials, the constructional techniques, the spaces, the functional problems and the design approach that ran throughout the design until the building form was eventually finalised.

There are some other factors that architecture is concerned with that have effects on the consequence of the form, such as non-expert agency – the users who are involved in the design or the long-term process of evolutionary maintenance of the building in actual use. The design of a building is not a one-off work, but an evolutionary process over its lifetime. Maintenance techniques and strategic programming for future adaptations are crucial to a building's

[388] Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, p. 16.

longevity. Non-expert agency can be empowered in the process of a building's evolution from the beginning of the design. An intention to apply non-expert agency to design can be seen in a social housing project of Elemental in Iquique, Chile.[389] Instead of providing inhabitants with finished houses, they were given basic raw units that they could complete later, with additional unused external spaces that could be used for building extensions. Elemental understood the self-build tradition and made use of it for people who were about to move into the houses, allowing them to claim the houses as their own.[390] The forms of these houses, as a consequence of the building work, are shaped through users' efforts to deal with living problems, and can be adaptively transformed over the buildings' lifetimes as a result of users' future changes, so that "pragmatic meaning" can be continuously emerging over the building's lifespan and pragmatic aesthetics is reflected in the evolutionary process. This project is an example of the type of counter-project which Lefebvre encourages. The architect never attempted to manifest his professional power by controlling every specific detail of the project; rather, he empowered the inhabitants who were going to be the real owners of their living space.

Figure 99. Social housing project, Elemental, Iquique, Chile, 2003.

[389] Elemental is an architectural practice founded in 2000, which grew out of the desire to address the problem of social housing in Chile. It has since evolved into an unusual practice that is a partnership between a university (Universidad Católica de Santiago), an energy company (COPEC, the Chilean oil company) and an architect (Alejandro Aravena). The Iquique housing project was Elemental's first project.

[390] Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider & Jeremy Till (2011), *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*, Abingdon, Oxon, & New York: Routledge, p. 44.

5.4 Architecture Is the Dynamic Process of Everyday Experience

Pragmatic aesthetics does not equal to functionalism, although they both refer to actual experience. Functionalism sees the building as a machine in which living factors are running mechanically. It concerns objective ways in which spaces are employed by functional events such as dining, sleeping and walking. However, pragmatism, as this research insists, is more than functionalism; it is about an aesthetics of everyday life, a living art. This kind of aesthetics does not come from God, or from a muse which is isolated from actual life. Rather, it is integrated with daily activities. Only when one pays full attention to everyday life, when one's intellect is immersed in bodily experience, will this kind of aesthetics emerge. Pragmatic aesthetics is neither a static abstraction nor a universal truth followed by everything, but a dynamic accumulation of the interaction between environmental circumstances and living intentions in everyday life. Dewey's "somatic naturalism" could clearly represent the idea of pragmatic aesthetics. "Somatic naturalism" sees that the value of art can only be found through the intuitive senses of the body and practical activities in everyday life, from the interaction between life and environment. Pragmatism is about not only the functional usage of certain spaces, but also the body's immediate perceptions and actions in response to a particular environment. The sensorial part of culture is what pragmatism believes in, and what premises the sense of everydayness. The sense of everydayness can be perceived through a pragmatic way of understanding the world.

Pragmatism is always looking towards consequences, and the consequences can be both physical and spiritual effects. Everydayness rejects a focus on either function or the spirit alone; it is an integration of both physical and spiritual life. In traditional Chinese understanding, physical function is inseparable from spiritual enjoyment; a sense of everydayness will be engendered when physical use of a space combines with spiritual enjoyment. Private gardens are typical places which show the way in which function and spirit are combined. Physical settings are well designed and built in gardens, but people come to gardens not only for the purpose of using these physical settings, such as resting in the shadow of a big tree in hot weather, but at the same time in order to gain emotional pleasure; thus Chinese men of letters have traditionally taken their leisure in gardens, so that gardens are historically favourite places

for artistic events.

Shusterman advocates the skills that can enhance the body's consciousness as a means of augmenting pleasure in everyday life.[391] The first skill he mentions is "simplicity". Our lives are easily distracted by too many details. Attention to life is sharper and more sustained if we focus on a limited range. The retrospective understanding of traditional countryside life in the design of Xiangshan Campus shows a way of pursuing simplicity in contemporary architectural practice. The farmlands retained from the original site became plain landscapes on the campus, still running by local people, providing an austere and impressive image of the old way of life that is harmonious with the environment. Another method Shusterman refers to is "slowness", which he believes can heighten the awareness of daily life. Things nowadays move too quickly for us to engage completely, and thus it is hard to grasp and interact with what is important with care and deliberation. It would be better for us to stop our rush and instead take enough time to be aware of the details of life passing by, so that life might become more engaging as there is more time for creativity. Xiangshan Campus provides wonderful places where life can be slowed down, while walking through the passages around the buildings, staying in gardens or having a cup of tea by the waterside within picturesque scenes. The campus thus creates the time needed to sense every bit of the experience of wandering; the sense of the pace of modern life, which often interrupts the ability of our bodily senses, has been removed, and thus more pleasure can be found in "slow time". Concentrating on the present moment can also heighten our attention, as we avoid immersing ourselves in the complexities of the unchangeable past and the unpredictable future. Being fully present in what we are currently doing and where we currently are enables us to gain more from what our surroundings offer. "Slowness" helps us to focus on the present moment by making it last longer, allowing the activities occupying that moment to take more time and to be performed slowly and thoroughly, so that we can possibly enjoy more within the present moment. There is another method Shusterman advocates, a mind-directed body-consciousness, which tries to raise the somatic unconsciousness to a level of spiritual consciousness. All of our bodily dispositions

[391] Richard Shusterman (2013), "Everyday Aesthetics of Embodiment", in Bhatt, R. (ed.), *Rethinking Aesthetics: The Role of Body in Design*, London: Routledge, pp. 13–35, pp. 19–24.

constitute our unreflective habits, the unconscious aspects of life. By making somatic life more consciousness, deliberate and controlled, we will be able to sublimate physical needs into an expression of spiritual life. Traditional Chinese private gardens are spiritual places, showing the way in which bodily pleasure is transformed into the spiritual. These are places of pleasure especially for Chinese men of letters. They are places where we are not concerned simply with the mundane details of living, such as the need to eat and drink, but where we are able to flee such trifles, beyond time and fully in the present moment; in this state, one's body is relaxed, one's mind is inspired, and one is receptive to works of beauty and art. Therefore, through such ways of enhancing the body's consciousness, and the activities that emerge from that, we can achieve an aesthetic experience in everyday life.

Aesthetic experience and bodily perceptions are highlighted in Wang Shu's design philosophy. He believes that "aesthetic sense" can be approached through the body's unconscious responses to its surroundings. He states that life cannot be understood only through rational thinking, but rather should be experienced and enjoyed without too much logos.[392] Logos always refers to intellectual thoughts, set apart from sensuous experience. What Wang Shu means to emphasise is a certain human capacity for intuitive insight, nous, to which the body is subject. According to Aristotle, nous refers to an immediate way of accessing an object, while logos refers to ultimate reason, which is caught in the endless retreat to fundamental principles and is not able to be grasped through immediate contact with the object.[393] The aesthetics of everyday life is grasped through intuitive perceptions when the body is immediately accessing its surroundings. However, functionalism starts from a utilitarian stance, dealing with fundamental principles of spatial types and forms on the basis of "form follows function", but regardless of the immediate perceptions that come from humans' internal capacity of intuition.

Architecture ought not to be seen simply as an event machine, and users ought not to be seen

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[392] Shu Wang (2002), *The Beginning of Design 设计的开始*, Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, p. 57.

[393] Richard Lee & Christopher Long (2007), "Nous and Logos in Aristotle", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie Und Theologie*, vol. 54 (3), pp. 348–367, p. 348.

as objects physically running events with the cooperation of spaces. Rather, the body's internal intuitive perceptions weigh more than the body's actions. In *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Tschumi sees people who are experiencing the spaces as mobile objects. Though "pragmatic meaning" (events) plays a key role in his theory, he prefers to take the body as a physical object moving through spaces. Bodies are treated and analysed in the same way as spaces and movements, so that, in Tschumi's eyes, bodies are more like objects, equivalent to physical spaces, rather than subjects with the capacity of bodily senses and thus able to actively perceive spaces and produce emotions. Therefore, though Tschumi lays considerable emphasis on events and everyday life, he is looking at everyday life through an objective eye and trying to rationally analyse the relationship between bodies and spaces on the basis of setting himself as an outsider, instead of sensing the living spaces from a subjective point of view. Different from Tschumi, Wang Shu sees the body from the eyes of the body itself; the body acts as a sensory subject, actively and effectively producing perceptions responding to external spaces. Bodies are capable of accessing spaces immediately, sensing the surroundings and causing emotions and feelings, thus generating a sense of poetry. It is the body's effort that allows all bodily senses to be fully immersed in spaces until a kind of "aesthetic sense" is aroused.

Therefore, there are basically two ways that the body is associated with the space around it. One is a sort of mechanical connection that refers to physical correspondence between the form and the scale of the space and the body's position or movement. The body often acts as a passive object in this case. When the body is encountering spaces, it usually responds with certain bodily actions as a result. Functionalism is in this category. The second association is about a sensuous connection between the body and the space. The body is an active subject in this case, and this type of connection relies on the body's sensorial system, which always attempts to translate environmental information into a corresponding bodily emotion, so that the body can be creative in this case. Somaesthetics is in this category, as the sense of beauty is always worked out on the basis of the body's affective judgement. In this sense, of "an architecture of enjoyment", one ideal that Lefebvre looks for, can be approached, if there is either a direct association between the body's pleasure and physical spaces, or a paradigm

established on the base of the analogical association between the body and the non-body.[394] For example, the bath in ancient Rome and the dome of the Pantheon are both spaces of enjoyment. The bath is the place where the body and mind prepare themselves for sensuality. The luminous dome of the Pantheon can be perceived by the body and gives it a particular sensation, and the body is aware that the dome is analogical to the grand image of the cosmos, so that bodily perception is associated with the non-body image that means something in the mind, and thus the dome becomes a space of enjoyment. The different types of association between the body and the space are something that could be further explored in future research.

"Pragmatic meaning" is produced on the basis of a background of common sense – an understanding which is unthinking and unconscious, which it unnecessary, and at times impossible, to interpret through conscious language. When we set out to engage with surrounding spaces, common sense will become a background. Common sense helps people to imagine how to use spaces and then practise in particular ways within them. For instance, how people interact with the spaces in Centre Pompidou and Parc de la Villette, and how the architect designed to prompt the feelings and the "aesthetic sense" people perceive in Xiangshan Campus, all rely on common sense.

As Norberg-Schulz says, a place can become alive only when the space becomes a system of meaningful place, but how to make a space meaningful? Any place contains certain sorts of common features which act as references understood by all people living in that culture. We accommodate ourselves within this system and thus we are conditioned by the system. At this point, we know what things mean in our living place, and thus it becomes alive. For one to participate properly and efficiently in a culture one must know how to use the common senses in that culture. Culture is about a complex of common senses. Only when architecture concretises such common senses in its spaces, being homogenous with the whole system,

[394] Henri Lefebvre (2014), *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, Stanek, L. (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 137–138, 144–145.

does it become meaningful to us.[395]

It is when architects and users share the same common-sense system that the buildings can at times work in the way the architects expected. Even though Tschumi tries not to expect a specific "pragmatic meaning" in Parc de la Villette but leaves the meaning to be filled up by users, he does have tendencies, such as creating points for point-like events, paths for movements and surfaces for surface-like events. These tendencies are still derived from a common sense shared by everybody. No matter whether a space serves as an indexical sign or a symbolic sign, the premise of making activities happen in any particular space depends on people's common sense that links the space to certain results. In Xiangshan Campus, bodily senses serve as the most common property for everybody. The architect designed spaces with the intention of creating certain feelings in the mind – a sort of "aesthetic sense"; people may then experience the feelings that the architect sought to create when they are engaging in these spaces, so that a sort of "aesthetic sense" can be achieved.

It is impossible to discuss the meaning of architecture by looking at the architecture alone. Architecture can be a physical object, a place of activities, a social organisation, an art work, and so on. Architecture alone is impossible to define, because it is incomplete and unproductive. Thus, the autonomy of architecture is hardly survived. It has to refer to exterior things to make itself fully meaningful. It is always ready to approach culture, geographic context, people and aesthetics, so that it is always becoming and reforming into a new thing. The attitude towards design which this research leads to is that architecture ought neither to be reduced to slogan-like concepts, the descriptions of ambitions, nor "seductive images" for the purpose of selling itself and its products. Architecture should always be a "cultural discourse and a frame of life".[396] The beauty of architecture does not equal forms, and architecture ought not to be seen as a rigid machine of events only. However, actual

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[395] Christian Norberg-Schulz (1969), "Meaning in Architecture", in Jencks, C. and Baird, G. (eds.) *Meaning in Architecture*, London: Barrie & Jenkins, pp. 215–229, pp. 220–225.

[396] Kenneth Frampton (1991), "Reflections on the Autonomy of Architecture: A Critique of Contemporary Production", in Ghirardo, D. (ed.), *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture*, Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 17–26, pp. 18, 23.

experience in real spaces needs to be a more central concern in many cases. Architectural form should be more the consequence of the practical management of existing conditions, and architecture ought to be appreciated as a place where the poetry of everyday life happens, a place where people actually experience this poetry with their bodily senses. The body's perceptions and experience are the final answers to architectural meaning. None of the extra symbols possible are necessary to be sought out and disguised as architectural meaning.

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